Everybody's

FIRST IN FI ON

Union
Sept 25 '15
Gift of Hood Stafford Watson
Ann Arbor Mich

BER 19

25¢

Craig Kennedy
in a New Series
of Mystery Stories

Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Here they are Sir! the world's most distinguished cigarettes—*in a special new size*—20 *for* 30¢

Try them tonight for your Luxury Hour

-that easy chair hour after the day's toil, when every man feels entitled to taste life's best.·· Soon you will smoke them *exclusively*

PALL MALL *Specials*
New size-plain ends only
20 *for* 30¢

No change in size or price of PALL MALL *Regulars* [cork tip]

Peerless Pall Mall! *Rolls-Royce* of cigarettes. No other blend has ever numbered among its friends so many of the world's successful and discerning men. Now, volume production has put this cigarette aristocrat within reach of all. A new size—a new price! The *new* Pall Mall Special is slightly smaller in girth than Pall Mall Regulars. But the inimitable Pall Mall quality remains intact—with the same rich blend of the finest oriental tobaccos. Try them tonight for *your* Luxury Hour.

20 *for* 30¢

[WEST OF THE ROCKIES 20 *for* 35¢]

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Everybody's

NUMBER THREE SEPTEMBER, 1923 VOLUME XLIX

If It's in Everybody's It's a Good Story

CONTENTS

A COMPLETE NOVEL

Top Dog — WILLIAM ALMON WOLFF — 91
Illustrations by SIDNEY H. RIESENBERG

SEVEN SHORT STORIES

Rendezvous — L. A. R. WYLIE — 3
Illustration by LAURENCE HERNDON

In the Descendent — BONNIE GINGER — 39
Illustration by JOSEPH A. MATURO

A Square Guy — HARLEY P. LATHROP — 49

Thicker Than Water — ARTHUR B. REEVE — 80
Illustration by HAROLD ANDERSON

The Cows of Madura — WALTER DE LEON — 129

The Cake Eater — W. CAREY WONDERLY — 139

A Samson Reversal — GERALD B. BREITIGAM — 171

THREE SERIALS

Thoroughbred — MRS. WILSON WOODROW — 15
Illustrations by O. F. SCHMIDT

Mellowing Money — FRANCIS LYNDE — 59
Illustrations by J. M. CLEMENT

The Bucoleon Treasure — ARTHUR D. HOWDEN SMITH — 151
Illustration by RALPH PALLEN COLEMAN

OTHER FEATURES—Everybody's Chimney Corner, 173; Prose and Worse, by Gridley Adams, 175; Everybody's Chestnut Tree, 177; Cover Design by F. E. Schoonover.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE RIDGWAY COMPANY

JAMES H. GANNON, President SEWELL HAGGARD, Editor C. H. HOLMES, Secy. & Treas.

SPRING AND MACDOUGAL STREETS, NEW YORK, N. Y.

6, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W. C., England

Entered as Second-Class Matter, August 16, 1899, at the Post-Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the Post-Office Department, Ottawa, Canada. Yearly subscription, $2.50, in advance. Single copy, twenty-five cents. Foreign postage, $1.00 additional. No extra postage for Canada.

EVERYBODY'S takes all reasonable precautions for handling manuscripts submitted, but assumes no responsibility for their safety.

Copyright, 1923, by The Ridgway Company, in the United States and Great Britain. Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, England.

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The stout man turned. But one of the women stood against the door. She was old and gaunt. He could have knocked her down easily, but he shrank from the very thought.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Rendezvous

Few Stories More Powerful or as Worth While Have Been Written. Everybody's Will Have More Contributions from the Same Author

By I. A. R. Wylie

Illustration by Laurence Herndon

THE shop door opened quietly, but the moment the stout man with the suitcase crossed the threshold, a fierce whirring, like the buzz of a giant wasp, set up, culminating in a shrill, unmodulated clamor. The intruder seemed astonished and puzzled. He closed the door hurriedly but without diminishing the hubbub which, on the contrary, became more insistent, as if some one were calling frantically for help. The dusk, in which the contents of the shop floated dimly, like half-recognized monsters in an aquarium, added to his discomfort. It was not until, accidentally, he stepped to one side that the noise ceased. He glanced down at his feet, and then, with a good-humored twinkle, at the shadowy woman behind the counter,

"Couldn't think where it came from," he said.

The woman was knitting. She did not look up.

"The bell is under the boards, *monsieur*."

"So I gather. It's enough to scare your customers out of their wits, though, if you don't mind my saying so."

"Most of my customers know about it. They step off at once."

"I see. So you can tell a stranger a mile away. I call that a good idea." He set down his suitcase and rubbed his pink face with a large colored handkerchief. "I hope, though, it doesn't mean that strangers aren't welcome," he added jovially.

"If they bring business, every one is welcome, *monsieur*."

"Well, I'm all right, then. You see, *madame*, I carry business about with me wherever I go. Really, I cannot help myself. It's more than business—it's a hobby—a sport. Another man, landed at a delightful little place like this without a decent train for the next twelve hours, would have taken a holiday. But I'm not like that. I said to myself: 'My friend, who knows? There may be an opening for you even here.' And so—here I am." Remembering that he still wore his hat, he removed it, with an awkward flourish. "*Pardon, madame.* It was that noise—it startled the good manners out of me."

"It doesn't matter," she murmured.

The dusk still troubled him. He stood rooted to the spot as if he were afraid of treading on something that would let loose a fresh outcry.

"I hope, *madame*—I am not too late——"

"No, no! I did not expect customers. I will make a light."

"The days are beginning to close in," he remarked cheerfully.

She struck a match and held it close to the wick of an oil-lamp hanging from the low ceiling. By the feeble yellow glow he could see her white arms, upstretched and bare to the elbows, and the rounded, gracious lines of her body. It pleased him peculiarly. An agreeable exciting trickle seemed to run down his back-bone. The dusk

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

receded, and he picked up his suitcase and carried it rather laboriously to the counter, where he set it down again with a little grunt of relief. He had carried it all the way from the station and had had enough of it. Though he was almost disproportionately thick-set for his height, he was not really very strong. Or, rather, his strength had grown stiff with disuse. A layer of middle-aged softness covered it. His smart clothes were too tight for him, but ten or fifteen years before he had been slender and wiry and tough as whip-cord. Something about his head, sparsely covered with colorless fair hair, about the small, compressed mouth, still suggested a lost meagerness. His blue eyes, above the round pink cheeks, were unexpectedly bright and piercing. They blinked and snapped with good humor.

"Now I am going to show you something," he said.

He opened the suitcase solemnly, like a magician. The lamp was beginning to burn up, and its light was thrown full on the contents—toys of all sorts—dolls, soldiers, animals quaintly carved and running on wooden wheels, and a small, mysterious box. He picked up the latter object and held it in the palm of his hand.

"Behold!" he said.

Apparently he did nothing. The lid flew open, and a French soldier, carrying the tricolor in one hand and a sword in the other, leaped up. His arms were on wires and waved with a grotesque, lifelike fury. From beneath a minute musical box tinkled the "Marseillaise." The stout man burst out laughing.

"I can't help it," he said. "Of course I've seen it a hundred times and every time I have to laugh. Every one laughs—children most of all. At the last place I was at, I took an order for six dozen, and they're repeated already. And it wasn't a big place, either. Now, you, *madame*——"

HE LOOKED up at her. There was only the width of the counter between them, and their eyes met, not casually, furtively, as is the way with most people who do not know each other, but full and penetratingly. They were like wrestlers who have caught each other in so close a grip that neither can move. The stout man felt the blood pound in his temples. The queer, delicious feeling in his back-bone came again, only more violently. He had expected nothing like this. If he had managed to get a couple of small orders, he would have thought himself lucky. But her eyes were beautiful—amazing. Under the finely arched brows they seemed almost golden. They dropped at last, with an effort, and he saw the blood rush up under the fair skin of her neck. She had blushed like a girl. He caught the glitter of silver threads amid the dense blackness of her hair. Her white hands were dimpled. The crude, sharp lines of youth had everywhere been blurred and softened. She had the allure of maturity—the fascination of knowledge and experience veiled in a tantalizing womanhood.

The stout man was glad she was not quite young any more. He was not young himself. Besides, girls bored him. They giggled stupidly. One was always getting into difficulties—a woman like this was different. She understood. She knew how to take care of herself.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked rather confusedly. "It is good—eh?"

"Yes; it is very good——"

But she would not look at him. She took up the toy and pressed the soldier back into his box. The next moment he flew out again, waving frenziedly.

"You see, he is a true Frenchman." The stout man laughed. "You can't suppress him for long. I tell you, I've sold hundreds——"

"Our people round here wouldn't care for it," she objected.

"You can't tell. Of course, village folk are slow and conservative—don't I know it?—but, on the other hand, they jump at something really novel. It's cheap, too."

"Our people are very poor," she said.

"Well, of course—if you say so—but the place seemed to me rather prosperous—the houses almost new—as if they had been built yesterday. Never had a fire here, I suppose?"

She had gone back to her knitting.

"No; not a fire."

"And your little shop, now— I'll wager you do a nice little business. I can tell, you know. I've got a nose for that sort of thing. Have to have. I've got to know whom I can give credit to and whom I can't." He looked about him

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

appraisingly. The vague and rather menacing shapes which had loomed out of the dusk had now resolved themselves into a harmless, oddly assorted collection of cheap sweets, toys, haberdashery, writing-materials and fancy articles, grouped in painful order on different shelves. Another man might have been contemptuously amused, but he saw at once that the woman behind the counter knew her business.

"You've got the right line, *madame*, if you don't mind my saying so. All you want now is a few novelties—something to make people talk. I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll let you have three dozen on sale or return, on condition that, if you sell them, you order another two dozen cash down. It's a fair offer. I don't make it to every one. Three francs each. You could get five for them easy——"

"I don't know," she said in her low voice. "I'd have to think about it."

"You mean," he said, shaking a square finger playfully at her; "you mean you're going to consult your husband. Now, you're a clever woman, *madame*, if you don't mind my saying so. I can see that. I'll wager anything you built this nice little business up yourself—without anybody's help. Now, isn't that so?"

"Yes, *monsieur;* that is so."

"You see? Well then, why not follow your own good sense?" From his breast-pocket he took a printed card and laid it on the counter. "That is my firm. Noted for fair dealing. In Paris itself I took orders for nearly twenty thousand francs."

He paused a moment, watching her carefully. She had taken up the card between her thumb and forefinger and was reading it, but he could not see her face. His eyes wandered to the white neck, to where the black, smooth hair melted into two soft curls, delicate and symmetrical as flowers. His voice thickened a little.

"One of the biggest toy-makers in the world, *madame*. You can take my word for it—what we turn out, sells. But your husband—well, we men are different—I admit it—difficult and prejudiced—old-fashioned. Women are more practical. They know that business is business."

"All the same, I must think it over. And to-morrow"—she lifted her eyes fleetingly to his—"*monsieur* will be gone."

The glance had been swift as the passage of a rapier. And yet he could not have mistaken its significance. It was part mocking, part tantalizing, part regretful. He felt sure that, bowed again over her knitting, she was smiling to herself.

He leaned nearer to her over the counter. His own eyes were brighter than ever. His pink cheeks had grown moist. It was really a piece of luck for him. Business had been a cruel grind—a fierce haggling with hard-headed men who treated him like dirt, a ceaseless rushing hither and thither with conciliatory grins and platitudes. Now an oasis offered itself in which he could relax, become human, the man that he, in fact, was.

AND he saw her point of view, too. He understood her. Things would be pretty dull in a stagnating little hole like this. Of course, she knew she was beautiful. She knew how to use her eyes, at any rate. And he was a man of the world. The gold band twinkling in and out of the light with the flying white hands did not daunt him. He could imagine her block of a husband. Besides, women knew how to manage when they chose—Frenchwomen, especially. You couldn't beat them at it. There was no need to grudge himself a harmless intermezzo.

"I don't know," he said. "After all, I've done a lot of business—twice as much as any one expected. I've earned a rest. My firm is reasonable. I might put up here for two or three days—especially if I had a friend to make the time pass—" He waited, smiling cunningly.

"*Monsieur* should make many friends," she said, still with a hint of secretive laughter in her voice.

"Oh, I don't know—well, perhaps I do. I'm a friendly fellow. I like to give people a good time. I'd like to give you a good time, if you don't mind my saying so. And why not? Life is short. One has to take one's chance when it comes."

"That is true, *monsieur*."

"And perhaps I could do a bit of business as well. I have to think of that, you know. You might tell people about me—sort of introduce me. Country folk are queer—suspicious. You could make it easier——"

"Yes; perhaps I could do that."

"And the little matter of the three dozen? Well, we can talk of that later. I won't

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

hurry you. To-morrow at this time, shall we say? It will be quiet like this? We don't want our chat interrupted, eh? Your husband——"

Her hands had fallen, quiet, in her lap. He had not realized before how pleasing had been the monotonous chatter of her needles. They had filled the shadowy little shop with warmth and homeliness. Now it was as though a heart had stopped beating—as though a spirit had fled, leaving a chill, empty shell.

The woman was looking past him. He felt sure that she was expecting the door to open and some one to come in. He began to hurry his toys back into his suitcase. He wanted suddenly to get away.

"My husband never comes before midnight," she said, "sometimes not till just before morning."

And now he could not mistake the significance of her tone. He choked a little, stumbling over his words.

"Well, every one to his taste—so long as one knows— Till to-morrow, then, *madame*."

"Till to-morrow, *monsieur*."

But he was in such a hurry that he forgot the door-bell. It screamed at him like a savage animal violently roused.

THE street was empty. Its emptiness and silence startled him even more than the bell had done. It was like being pitchforked from tumult into nothing. Not that the little shop had been exactly tumultuous. But it had been full of warmth and a kind of excitement. The stout man was not in the least imaginative, and it was probably a childish memory of some fairy-tale which made him think of a dark cave full of secret enchantments that had closed suddenly behind him. He set down his suitcase and mopped himself.

"Hot stuff!" he said aloud. "No doubt of that—hot stuff!"

But he was already ashamed of his own backwardness. He saw now that he hadn't played up—hadn't taken his opportunity—and it had hurt his pride. He glanced over his shoulder. But evidently she regarded the day's work as finished, for the lamp had been turned out and the shop window gleamed darkly.

"Well, to-morrow is also a day." He consoled himself. For he knew that he would come back and that she had meant him to come back.

In the mean time, it bothered him a good deal that he did not know in which direction to turn. He had arrived in daylight, and now the stealthy autumn dusk had advanced to nightfall, and all his casually observed landmarks were transfigured or obliterated. And there was no one to ask. Even in the afternoon he had noticed the queer emptiness of the place. There was none of the loitering and gossiping which he associated with village life. The people went their way rapidly, avoiding each other, slipping into their houses like rabbits into their warrens. Now they had disappeared altogether.

"Early birds in this nest," the stout man reflected disgustedly. "Must take my chance."

Though the moon was still low on the horizon, it lit the opposite side of the narrow street with an unwelcome brightness. The little white houses were like a row of dead faces with blank eyes and gaping mouths. The stout man walked on, whistling to cover the noise of his own footfalls. He was tired, and his patent-leather boots hurt him, and he felt at once chilled and suffocated, as one might do in a vault or a long underground tunnel. He was glad when the street came suddenly to an end. And yet he had again the odd, sinking sensation of standing on the edge of nothing.

It was the unexpected vastness of the place. The opposite side of the square was like a distant line of foam. In the center a crucifix, mounted on a low, broad pedestal, reared up starkly, throwing a long shadow, and on either hand the houses seemed to shrink back from it—aghast and horror-stricken.

The stout man crossed the square slowly. The cobbles of the street had been replaced by worn slabs of stone which gave out a melancholy echo under his feet. The suitcase had grown intolerably heavy and halfway across he set it down on the pedestal of the crucifix, and stretched his arms in grotesque and unconscious imitation. He was easier now that he had got away from the houses.

"Some old monument," he thought. He bent down to decipher the inscription. But there was none. The base of the crucifix was scarred and pitted. There were

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

holes in the soft stone that might have been carved out with a boy's knife. The stout man's eyes traveled slowly up the gaunt, extended figure. And again he suffered a cold discomfort. He looked straight up into the face, bowed tragically, as if to meet his gaze. And it was mutilated. The moon, risen above the roofs of the houses, threw black shadows into the empty eyes and into the great hole which gaped from mouth to ear. The nose had gone. And yet it was still human. It still expressed an awful loneliness and pity. The stout man was not sensitive. He had seen ugly things in his life. He had seen repulsive crucifixes. There was one in his own village. But this was different. This had been hanging there a long time. And corruption had set in.

He remained there for several minutes. He had been hot, and now an icy perspiration broke over his body. A chill breath seemed to be rising out of the stones. He had a baffling sensation of being held there against his will—of being forced to wait until something happened to him. He knew now that he had never been this way before—and yet somewhere at the back of his brain there lowered a recollection—waiting to pounce upon him.

He shook himself at last.

"I never saw that beastly thing, at any rate," he said.

With a disgusted oath he caught up his suitcase and set back the way he had come.

"JEAN FRANCOIS s'en va-t-en guerre,
Tra-la-la, tra-la-la—
Mais il reviendra—il reviendra—
Tra-la-la, tra-la-la——"

"That's a grand little song you're singing," said the stout man, stepping with roguish exaggeration over the loose board. "But it's a dismal tune, if you don't mind my saying so. One would imagine that poor Jean François wasn't a great favorite. Not much of a welcome waiting for him, eh?"

The woman behind the counter smiled faintly.

"There are many ways of coming back, *monsieur*."

"Are there? Well—perhaps. Nobody could help coming back to you anyhow, *madame*." He made her a gallant bow. "But I don't like dismal songs. I'm a lively fellow. There's enough worry in the world without our making a song about it. That's what I say. And that 'Jean François' business—why, everybody seems to sing it here. The girl at the *estaminet* was at it last night. It gets on my nerves."

"It's an old village song, *monsieur*. It comes back to us when we are at work and thinking of other things. I won't sing it when you are here."

"That would be a pity. You have a nice voice. I'm very fond of singing. In fact, my parents wanted me to go in for the opera. But then—well, my career was interrupted. I had to make money to keep the family going. Well, it's no use crying over the past——"

"The past is father to the present, *monsieur*."

"Ah, *madame* is a philosopher! I'm a simple fellow—too simple, perhaps. I take things as they come. I don't worry."

This time he had not brought his suitcase with him. But he took the square jack-in-a-box from his pocket and laid it on the counter.

"Well, what about this little fellow, eh, *madame?* Shall we say three dozen, sale or return?"

"Yes. I have thought it over—three dozen, then——"

"I thought you would. You won't regret it. I have a paper here—if you would just sign your name they will be delivered in a week. And in two days you will be sold out—*hey presto*——"

He was in a merry, self-confident mood, and smarter than ever. He wore a fancy waistcoat and his pointed patent-leather boots had been polished till they shone. The night before he had been overtired by the long journey and inclined to imagine things. His nerves had run away with him. Now he was quite sure of himself.

"If you would sign just there, *madame*——"

She had found pen and ink, and she wrote in the place which he had indicated with his stubby forefinger—carefully and laboriously, after the manner of a peasant. It gave him time to look at her unobserved. Well, his imagination had not deceived him on that score, at any rate. You might scour the aristocracy of Europe for anything so richly beautiful. He grew a little warm looking at her. He could feel his heart against his ribs.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"There, *monsieur*——"

He took the paper from her. Their hands touched, and it was as though a current of electricity had rushed up his arm to his brain.

" 'Marguerite Foissart'—what a pretty name! I like the 'Marguerite' best, though, if you don't mind my saying so. And I'll tell you what—you're prettier than either of them."

She gave him one of her quick, deep glances.

"*Monsieur* is flattering. I am an old woman."

"Old? Bah!" He snapped his fingers. "That for your old age!"

"Fifteen years ago I was just twenty, *monsieur*."

"Well, that's one way of telling me—I'm not much older myself. Thirty-five—what's that? Nothing. One is at the beginning of life. Anything is possible."

"Anything," she admitted under her breath.

"One has learned wisdom. One looks at things sensibly—reasonably. One knows that one must take one's chance of a good time—when it offers itself——"

He leaned nearer to her with his elbow on the counter. He felt a subtle fragrant warmth creeping over his senses, like the breath of an enchantment. She drew back a little. On her half-averted face he caught the flicker of a smile. He laughed. He knew the game. Two could play at it.

"Why, you're so young you play with toys!" He pounced upon a rag doll, soiled and battered, which he saw lying forgotten on one side, and brandished it triumphantly—accusingly. "Aren't you ashamed——"

She gave it a swift sidelong glance and resumed her knitting.

"That—belongs to my daughter, *monsieur*."

"A daughter who still plays with dolls, then? That's almost as good. I'll wager she's not more than five years old."

"Yes—about five——"

"You see? Five! A charming age. I envy you. I love children. Give her Monsieur Jack-in-a-box with my love. Do you know, *madame*, I have one ambition in life. It is to have a home of my own—a wife—a quiverful of jolly boys and girls to play with. But it's a hard business for a fellow like me. I'm too generous. Money comes and money goes. And then my work—always on the move—there's no home in the world for me." The tears came to his eyes. He was deeply moved. "Sometimes it's almost too much for me. Last night, for instance, I felt so alone and friendless. And then this place; it isn't particularly cheerful, if you don't mind my saying so. When I got into that square of yours, as deserted as a desert, I wanted to cut my throat——"

SHE stopped knitting, and again the blank left by those softly chattering needles chilled him. It put him unaccountably on his guard.

"The square? We have no square, *monsieur*. If it is the church you mean——"

"I didn't see any church. There was a battered old crucifix——"

"The church is there, *monsieur*. It is still there."

He pinched his lower lip between his finger and thumb, blinking rapidly, as though disconcerted by some sudden thought.

"You mean— Oh, I see—it hadn't occurred to me. Well, it's a dismal place. You people ought to build there—get on with things. No use brooding over the past. That's what I say."

"The church is very old, *monsieur*. They say there are kings of France buried in the vaults."

He nodded.

"I can believe that. I should think their spooks were on the prowl last night. I'm not superstitious, but I didn't like the place. I'm a genial sort of fellow—no ghosts for me. I like to have friends—a good time—a pretty woman——"

The little shop seemed to have grown stiflingly hot. The heat blurred his vision—lay thick in his throat. Through the haze he could see her hand shining on the counter—inert and waiting. Before he had time to thick, he had seized it and was kissing it furiously. He could feel the cool, strong fingers tighten on his. He was swept off his feet, drunk with excitement.

"Margarita! Margarita!"

"Hush," she said quietly, imperatively.

She withdrew her hand. The door had opened, and out of the dusk an old woman came into the shop. She wore a shawl over her gaunt shoulders, and the gray, straight

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

hair hung in neglected wisps about her face. Her skin was yellow and lined, and she had brooding, melancholy eyes, deep-sunken under the bony brows, which rested on the man and then dropped, avoiding him.

He coughed. He fidgeted with the goods on the counter, pretending to examine them. He was trembling all over. It had happened just as he had meant it to happen. Or, perhaps, not quite. It was like paddling in a shallow pool and stumbling suddenly into deep black waters.

"For three sous, then——"

"*Vous voilà, maman*——"

"And I have a note for you from the Dubois."

"Thank you. Give them my regards——"

"Good-night."

"Good-night."

The old woman went out as she had come in, noiselessly, avoiding the treacherous bell, closing the door cautiously behind her.

"Margarita," he whispered thickly.

She looked straight at him. There was no light laughter in her strange eyes, but an overwhelming, torrential emotion. And yet her lips smiled steadily. They made mock of him. He seized her hand again. He pressed his hot mouth to her white arm. And now she no longer resisted. Rather, it was as though she, too, were laying fast hold of him.

"Margarita, you're the finest beauty I've set eyes on! I fell head over heels in love with you the moment I saw you—I couldn't help myself—I stayed on because of you—I forgot business—everything. I knew we had to be friends. You believe in fate, don't you?"

"Yes—I believe in fate."

"When I got off that train I had a queer feeling—as if it had all happened to me before—as if I'd come back and something amazing was going to happen."

But even in his extraordinary excitement he knew that she was looking past him. His eyes, raised involuntarily, followed hers, and it seemed to him that people were watching them through the shop windows—white, ghastly smudges pressed against the thick panes—blurred, distorted faces.

"We're not safe here," he muttered. "Any one might come in. I must see you—I've got to have you to myself. Isn't there any spot in this God-forsaken nest?"

Her eyes had dropped. All at once she changed. She became demure—shrinking, virginal. Her hand quivered in his. His self-confidence came back to him with a rush. He had been half afraid. Now he was master of himself—of her. He laughed unsteadily.

"Come," he said, winking at her; "you're a clever woman. Surely it can be done."

"In a little place like this," she murmured, "people watch——"

"Don't I know it? But at night—eh? You said your husband didn't come back till late. An hour's *tête-à-tête* with a poor wanderer—come now!"

"There's the mill," she said, hardly above her breath. "I used to live there. It's empty now. You go across the wooden bridge and over to the farther bend of the river—up the wooden steps——"

"I've seen the place," he whispered back. "You can see it from the inn. At nine o'clock——"

"At nine o'clock, then."

She gave his hand a furtive pressure and released herself, drawing back into her deep calm. He understood. He stood up, breathing heavily, but with his light-blue eyes dancing with triumphant excitement. From the door he made her a bow—profound and mocking.

"*Au revoir, madame.*"

"*Au revoir, monsieur.*"

The bell sent its furious, menacing cry after him. It was strange that he could not remember it.

HE TOOK care to leave the inn unobserved. The evening had turned cold, with a hint of rain in the wind, and he did not want to draw attention to himself by unusual conduct. Above all things, he did not want trouble. A *commis-voyageur* who made even a village impossible for himself was a fool. He had to take his pleasures discreetly.

"I'll be off to-morrow," he thought. "That'll put an end to it."

He was pleased to find that he could consider the episode so coolly. In the shop he had lost his head. He had behaved like a raw youth, and it made him purse his small mouth uneasily to realize that there had been a moment when he had been prepared to fling his career to the winds and

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

himself to the devil. He comforted himself with the thought that it had been only a momentary upheaval, with no aftermath. He could go forth on his little adventure in the right spirit of bonhomie and gallant discretion as became a man of the world. But at the bottom he nursed a grievance—a kind of resentment. She had made him dance to her tune. Now, at any rate, she should dance to his.

Even after he had left the inn well behind him he walked slowly, casually, like a man going for an aimless stroll. On the bridge he lingered a moment and looked down at the broad, deep river running swiftly. He was not imaginative, but he thought of Marguerite Froissart. She was like that water. One had to look out or one would be swept off one's feet.

He lit a cigar, and smiled knowingly to himself. He had dined well, and he felt warm and stout and self-confident.

THE wind covered the sky with a thin veil of drifting cloud. To the southeast, whence it came, lay a black mass, moving imperceptibly, like the closing of a monstrous trap-door overhead. The light was curiously deceptive. The stout man, for instance, could see the old mill at the bend of the river quite distinctly, but the ground at his feet lay in a bog of shadow. His progress was made the more difficult by the condition of the road, which was, in fact, little more than a cart-track. The ruts were deep and slippery, and he stumbled in and out of them, cursing to himself. Trivial though the annoyance was, it disturbed his pose, his pleasant sense of security and power, and in an effort to escape he clambered awkwardly up a steep bank on his right hand, feeling along its edge with the point of his walking-stick.

But his condition was hardly bettered. In the increasing darkness he ran the risk either of losing all contact with the road or of stumbling back into it painfully and ignominiously. Obeying an impulse, he suddenly left the embankment altogether, striking across the fields toward the mill, which, lying to the west, was still visible—a grotesque shadow that peered over the river-mist, watching him.

Almost at once he regretted his decision. A coarse, tall grass whipped his legs with its wet thongs. His feet squelched in and out of the clayey soil with a thick, slobbery sound that was unaccountably familiar and detestable. He had a feeling that this, too, had happened to him before. On some other night in his life he had toiled against mud and rain and wind. And he had been angry. The memory, indefinite and haunting, increased his obscure resentment which flung itself on the thought of the woman who waited for him with a kind of hunger. He would show her that he was not the man to be disturbed for nothing.

He stumbled over a mound of earth and righted himself with a convulsive effort. The trap-door had closed overhead suddenly and completely. His hand, groping blindly for support, struck against a wooden stem that rose straight out of the ground to the level of his waist. There were others. All at once he found himself slithering and stumbling over a sea of rolling earth, battering himself against an incredibly hideous maze of stakes and cross-bars that seemed to dance about him in his desperate effort to escape barking his shins, tearing the skin from his outflung, frantic hands, striking into his soft body.

He stood still at last, like a maddened horse that has exhausted itself against an implacable terror. He was panting and wet with a cold perspiration. But gradually he grew calmer. He reasoned with himself. In a brief lull in the wind he struck a match, holding it to the obstacle nearest him.

It was a cross. In the circle of flickering light and spreading into the mist beyond were other crosses, rank upon rank, uniform, dropped from their fantastic dance into a martial rigidity. They stood round the stout man and seemed to wait for him, pathetic and menacing. On each cross was a brief inscription, roughly carved.

The match went out. He drew himself up with a deep breath and rubbed the moisture out of his eyes. He felt badly shaken. It was a nasty thing to have happened. But, after all, a cemetery was a cemetery. If he had not read the inscription on the cross nearest him it would not have troubled him so much. He muttered aloud:

"Good Heavens! It isn't possible—and yet—well, one never knows— Why not?"

He nerved himself to go on. Now that he had seen them and knew them for what they were, the crosses stood still and let

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

him pass among them without hindrance. But the mounds over which he slithered made him sick. He had to remind himself that they were artificial shapes made to flatter the grave-diggers' conventional sense of decency. In reality, no doubt, the bodies had been lumped together anyhow.

When, suddenly, the crosses fell away from him, he cried out. It was like falling headlong into nothing. He began to run into sheer terror, for he had now lost all sense of direction. The mill had vanished; the mist encircled him. The blood throbbed in his ears so that the sound of water was lost. In his blind haste he plunged on until he almost flung himself against a black, invisible wall, which to his inflamed fancy was solid darkness.

He stood back, panting and furious. He knew now where he was. Guided by a thread of light overhead, he could make out the wooden steps of which Madame Froissart had spoken. He grunted to himself. It had been a beastly business. But it was over. He was wet through and disheveled, and the pleasant after-dinner glow had been kindled to a devastating passion beyond his control. From the good-humored man of the world he had been shaken into something violent and primitive. But he did not care. He was glad. He was free. He had burst his chains. Too many people had treated him like dirt——

He began the ascent of the slippery steps, licking his cracked lips.

THE steps were rotten with moisture, and he felt them bend under him. He heard the mournful creak of the locked mill-wheel and the muttering of the mill itself, moribund and helpless in the grip of the rising wind. Had it not been for the narrow golden strip overhead he would have turned back. He would not have believed that a living thing beyond the scurrying rats could be in the place.

There must have been a strong draft somewhere. The door at the top of the steps resisted him, and the resistance stung his nervous impatience to fury. He flung his whole weight against the panels, which gave way violently with a screech of warped wood and rusty hinges, flinging him over a last huge step into the light. He was at first too blinded and breathless to see what lay before him, and the door, caught in a sudden gust, slammed to again. The next moment he was laughing noisily.

"Good Heavens! A party!"

The room was very large. In other days it might have been used as a granary. The high rafters lost themselves in darkness. There were four candles on the long, bare table, and their flames waved frantically in the wind that came from the loosely shuttered window opposite.

The room was full of women. They surrounded the table. They seemed to crowd endlessly out of the shadow. Madame Froissart sat at the head of the table. She was knitting, and the soft click of her needles played an odd accompaniment to the somber rush of the water underfoot. Beside her was the old woman with the gray, disheveled hair, staring in front of her with her sunken, melancholy eyes.

They were of all ages, but one thing was common to them all: it was as if a gray, hardly perceptible mist enveloped them. They were like people in whom life, diverted from its course, had taken a strange new form. One of them was different from the rest. She stood immediately opposite the stout man, so that he saw her first She was not a peasant. She had an air of authority, and her clothes, flung on anyhow, were of a faded, tattered elegance. A flowered hat perched crazily on her gray hair. Her lips kept up an incessant movement, but no sound came from them. She might have been ludicrous or pitiable.

And there was a girl—big and fat, with a large, misshapen head and a lolling mouth and dead eyes. She sat on the right of Madame Froissart and played with a jack-in-a-box, who jumped in and out of his prison like a mad thing, the tiny musical contrivance underneath him tinkling broken fragments of the "Marseillaise."

The stout man took off his cap and made a stiff, satirical bow. He was choked with anger. He saw that he had been fooled and made ridiculous. He wanted to beat the woman at the head of the table. As it was, he had to get himself out of the affair gracefully.

"I beg pardon, *mesdames*. I see I intrude. There is a nasty storm coming up, and I took refuge. I had no idea the place was occupied."

He congratulated himself. It was neatly done. Then it struck him as odd that no

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

one looked at him. They seemed to be unaware that he was there at all. A horrible, ridiculous suspicion assailed him that they were ghosts, or that he himself was unreal—the shadow of some one's dream.

"It was in the autumn," Madame Froissart said. "I remember it clearly, because we had just finished with the harvest." She spoke as one continuing a conversation. "A wonderful harvest. On the very night that they came, Christophe told me there had not been anything like it for twenty years."

"Oh, we had been talking of their coming," a voice said out of the twilight. "We knew that it might happen. We were always hoping, though——"

"Fire and blood—fire and blood everywhere——"

Madame Froissart nodded deferentially toward the woman in the flowered hat.

"Of course, *mademoiselle.* They came to the château first. It is not likely that you would forget."

"We saw the flames go up. It was a dark night. We had no idea they were so near. I was sitting, sewing, I remember——"

"Look here," the stout man interrupted impatiently. "I'm intruding. Permit me to withdraw."

He turned. But one of the women stood behind him against the door. She was old and gaunt, and one side of her face was badly scarred. He could have knocked her down easily, but he did not want to touch her. He shrank from the very thought. Besides, it was absurd——

"Of course, if you ladies insist—" he said, laughing immoderately. "But let me join, in, at any rate. Pray present me to the company, *madame*——"

He appealed to the woman at the head of the table. He was not angry with her now. He was glad that they were friends. He wanted to be friendly—get on a good footing. But she did not look up from her knitting. It seemed to him that she had changed. The mist lay over her too, but also she had grown younger—more familiar. It was like one of those mad dreams in which one person gradually becomes somebody else. The girl beside her was the only one who appeared to have heard him. She gazed idiotically in his direction, making little uncouth sounds as though she were trying to say something. She had ceased to play with the jack-in-a-box.

"We did nothing. What could we do? We just waited. Then François came running from the château. Somehow or other he had managed to get away. He told us to look out for ourselves."

"Fire and blood—fire and blood," said the woman in the flowered hat. She spoke more clearly, with a gesture of despair, and they turned toward her gravely.

"Yes, *mademoiselle;* you saw it all. François told us how you stood at the head of the great stairs. It was wonderful. Even they stopped for a moment. You said 'Gentlemen, everything in my house is at your disposal, but leave the village.'"

"You tried to save us."

"We shall never forget that, *mademoiselle.*"

"Fire and blood," the woman in the flowered hat repeated, with a kind of resignation.

"They laughed. One of them ran up the stairs and caught hold of you. That was the last François saw."

"They found the wine-cellar. They turned on the taps. They lay on their faces, lapping it up like dogs——"

The stout man beat his fist in the palm of his hand.

"Listen," he repeated loudly; "I don't know what you're talking about. It's all nothing to do with me."

IT WAS like being in a padded cell. No one heard him. He flung himself against soft walls that would not break. His voice was muffled. He tried to calm himself.

"It's absurd—absurd!" he repeated indignantly.

Madame Froissart counted her stitches. He could see her lips move. They were all silent for a moment. The steady mutter of the water underneath and the crack of the rotten rafters resumed predominance. The wind, rushing between the cracks of the shutters and under the warped door, sent dust scurrying in little whirlpools across the floor. The candle-light waved frantically, making the shadows behind the women sway hither, become monstrous and shrink to nothing.

"Some of us ran into the fields. But most of us thought it better to stay where we were. After all, we were inoffensive people. We had done nothing. We had a right——"

"We heard them in the distance. I remember Gustave leaning across the table

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

and patting my hand. 'It will be all right,' he said. 'We are old—every one respects gray hairs.' The children woke up crying. They came running to him. But I was not afraid for them. I thought, 'The children will be all right.' "

"You are all mad—every one of you!" shouted the stout man.

"We *are* all mad," the woman in the flowered hat said; "every one of us."

But she did not seem to know that he had spoken. Rather, it was as though he had echoed an inner voice to which she was always listening.

Madame Froissart put down her work. She leaned forward, with her chin resting on her strong white hand, her gleaming eyes fixed beyond the stout man on the door behind him, and he knew that she was watching for it to open.

"I had been standing here, watching and praying. I dared not go to the window, but I could see the red glare on the wall opposite. I could hear screams and shouting. I was terrified—especially for Christophe, who had not come home. It was then close on midnight. Suddenly he came up the steps. He was covered with mud. He was beside himself. He said: 'It's all over. They're after me. I've killed one of them. They spitted old Gustave on their bayonets as he came out of his cottage. I couldn't stand it. They have set fire to the church. They are hacking the crucifix——' "

"No! No!" the stout man shouted. "It's nothing to do with me. I wasn't there—I swear I wasn't. I don't remember the place. If I had been there, I should have remembered it. It stands to reason——"

The sweat ran down his limbs. If they had been men, he would have fought them—fought his way out. But they were more terrible. They were waiting for him to give the signal. They were closing in on him—noiselessly, imperceptibly. His soul quaked, went sick before the thought of what would happen when at last they touched him. And yet none of them had moved or looked at him. Only that strange, terrible girl——

" 'There's no hope,' Christophe said. 'I shall kill both of us.' He ran to the box where he kept his old gun, but it was not loaded. Of course it was not loaded. We were peaceful people. And before he could do anything they were crowding up the steps. I tried to fling myself in front of Christophe, but it was too late. They had seen him—with the gun in his hand—and they fired—several of them together—right in his face——"

THE stout man tried to throw out his hands as he did when he was pacifying an angry customer, but they were like lead. He could hardly move them.

"The whole thing is absurd—all you! I wasn't there! You can't hold me responsible. It isn't fair——".

"Can you remember what happened then, Madame Froissart?"

"They sacked our home. Somehow or other, the mill wouldn't burn, so they made a bonfire of the furniture outside. This table was too big—besides, Christophe had fallen across it—face upward—and even they——"

"And then?"

"One of them remained behind."

"I deny it—I deny it absolutely! If you have anything against me, say it straight out. I'm a peaceful fellow. I go about my business. I do no harm to any one. You oughtn't to brood over the past like this. If it's money you want—why, I'm willing to do the right thing——"

"The light had gone out, but there was light enough from the bonfire. His companions had gone off, laughing and joking. I could see him distinctly, standing with his back to the door, grinning at me. I can hear his voice now. 'You're a pretty bit of goods, if you don't mind my saying so.' "

The stout man's voice rose to a scream and broke.

"I was drunk—I was drunk! O my God! I didn't know what I was doing——"

"That was fifteen years ago."

"You see—fifteen years—fifteen years—" He dropped to his knees. He crawled toward them. "You can't—you can't—you have hearts—you are women—good Christians. Besides, I tell you I was drunk. A man isn't responsible when he's drunk. You know it—you should have pity——"

They did not see him. They did not hear him. Madame Froissart picked up her knitting. The woman behind him spoke for the first time.

"And then Yvette was born——"

"Nine months later."

He turned his head slowly, inevitably

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

toward the girl seated at the table. She was looking at him with her opaque, sightless eyes, without knowledge, without understanding. Then, as though wearied in an effort to grasp something beyond her reach, she went back to her toy. But the spring had broken and she began to cry.

The stout man gulped. An immeasurable horror had him by the throat. He knew that the end had come—the breaking-point of endless end, hideous and unendurable.

But they had forgotten to guard the window opposite. He remembered it clearly. It looked out over the river. If only he could reach it before they guessed his intention! He began to shuffle toward it, cringing, mouthing, with his hands held up before his face like a man breaking through thorns. His knees shook under him. His feet were leaden with nightmare. There was only a little way to go. At each step he expected to feel their hands on him, tearing him down. He could feel the heat of their breath. But no one moved. He sobbed aloud in the agony of their indifference. Like a panic-stricken, tortured animal he flung his soft body against the shutters, passing out with a broken whimper into space and silence.

The women sang as they made their way home over the dark fields.

"Jean François s'en-va-t-en guerre,
Tra-la-la, tra-la-la—
Mais il reviendra—il reviendra,
Tra-la-la, tra-la-la—"

The last notes of their voices were solemn and prolonged, like the last notes of a clarion-call.

FRENCH HOLD MEXICO
U. S. ARMY AWAITS ORDERS AT BORDER

THIS might have been used as a newspaper head-line at any time during the period which forms the background of the new serial "Kildare of the Border," which begins in October EVERYBODY'S. It was one of the most critical periods in American history, and one of the most picturesque. The pony express was then only an experiment; the day of high adventure, colorful romance was still with us. The author, John T. McIntyre, who also wrote "Blowing Weather," one of the popular literary successes of the year, skilfully blends fact with fiction in a story that is entertaining and educationally helpful. "Kildare of the Border" begins in—

October *EVERYBODY'S*—
out September 15th

Another story by I. A. R. Wylie will appear in October EVERYBODY'S—out September 15th.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

An Appealing Blend of Love and Mystery

THOROUGHBRED

Mrs. Bell Injects a Little Feminine Intuition into the Constance Lee Mystery and Starts Her Husband on a New Trail, Which Promises Some Unwelcome Developments to Several Who Cross It

By Mrs. Wilson Woodrow

Author of "Swallowed Up"

Illustrations by O. F. Schmidt

Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

JOHN BELL presented himself at his flat in the Bronx with his derby hat broken, a discolored eye and a swelling on one side of his jaw.

"For heaven's sake, John! You been in an accident?" shrilly demanded Mrs. Bell. She was a little woman with colorless, blond hair, a pointed nose and possessed of an insatiable curiosity. "What ran over you?"

"Nothing ran over me. Had a little mix-up." He was examining the distorted outline of his round face in the glass over the dresser. "Get me the witch-hazel, will you?"

"I thought you told me once," said Mrs. Bell, pattering back from the bathroom with the implements of first aid, "that crooks were harmless as kittens—a detective was always being threatened by 'em, and never hurt."

"This wasn't a crook"—shortly. "It was a judge."

"A judge?" Mrs. Bell's narrow eyes grew round; her imagination pictured a dignified, venerable figure in a black-silk robe. "Mercy, John! They'll send you up for it. And serve you right, too—fighting with a weak old man like that!"

"Huh!" Bell winced as he dabbed at the mouse painfully developing under his left eye. "Weak old man! Well then, so is Jack Dempsey. This bird's a regular Kentucky bear-cat. Ask Perry Gabriel."

Mrs. Bell thrilled. She was an ardent follower of society gossip in the newspapers.

"Not the Perry Gabriel that belongs to the Shallowbrook Hunt?" she asked breathlessly. "The one that gave five-thousand-dollar diamond bar-pins to twenty chorus-girls at that dinner of his once?"

"If he did, I'll bet the diamonds were phony," muttered the detective. "But you've called it right, old lady. And I'll say that he's the cheapest streak of yellow I ever got tied up with."

"And you and Perry Gabriel were both fighting this judge?"

"Well"—doubtfully—"I wouldn't exactly call it fighting—any more'n a coupla eggs fights with the egg-beater. That was just about the way it was—only, Gabriel got the worst scrambled of the two of us. It took Jim DeVries, the trainer out at the track, and two stable-hands to pry this Jeffries off of him."

"But what was it all about, John?"

"Oh, this Constance Lee blackmail affair.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Gabriel said something about her, and the judge tore into him."

Bell answered more or less at random. He was still worried about the look of his eye. But he had no sooner spoken than he realized his mistake. In the mirror he could see his wife's mouth open and the tip of her nose begin to quiver.

"Constance Lee?" she squeaked. "The beautiful Mrs. Norman Lee, of Park Avenue? Mrs. Hugo Wendell's best friend? Is she mixed up in it, too?"

HE MADE it a rule to keep business and his home divorced. The bosom of his family, to his mind, was a place for the discussion of film stars, the doings of the neighbors, the cleverness of the children, the extortions of butcher and baker, not to mull over the cases upon which he was engaged. But in the present instance he was helpless. The mention of those two names of the elect was like a taste of blood to a hungry tiger.

"Hold on! Hold on!"—interrupting her flood of questions. "I'll give you the layout; only, you keep what I tell you to yourself—understand? Don't be chewing it over with me afterward, and don't let it go any further."

He sat down, still holding the witch-hazel and cotton to his bruised cheek.

"To begin with," he said, "this Gabriel got blackmailed out of a bunch of money."

"How?" asked Mrs. Bell. "Did they have something on him?"

"Sure they did! He'd been pulling some deals that weren't just according to Hoyle, and he made the mistake of bragging about them to Mrs. Lee, who he was pretty soft on."

"And she held him up? A pretty young thing like her who goes with ——"

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute!" he growled. "How'd you expect me to get anywhere with you breaking in on me all the time? I didn't say that Constance Lee herself tapped Gabriel. It was her lawyer, Louis K. Beachey, who did that. But Gabriel couldn't understand how Beachey got the information that was used except from her. So when a second call was made on him, he decided to smoke her out; and that's where I came into the case.

"My instructions were to go at the investigation with a perfectly open mind—nothing but straight work. If she was guilty, all right; but I had to prove it. You see, Gabriel, for all his mad, was still pretty well stuck on her. So the first thing I started to do was to look up her record. But, believe me, she didn't have any. Talk about blank walls! That woman had fenced herself off so from her past that there was no way of getting through to it."

"That shows she's smart," said Mrs. Bell commendingly.

"Maybe so," replied Bell; "and then, again, maybe not. Anyhow, I figured that I'd have to work it out along a different line. There was no use trying to fix anything on her that she'd already done. That was plain. And no use trying to connect her with the Gabriel job. If she was in on that, her tracks were too well covered up. What I had to do was to lay low and catch her when she pulled off her next stunt; for it was a cinch, if blackmailing was her game, that she'd be at it again before long.

"Sure enough; it was only a little while until I got a clue that there was something doing. Off to Atlantic City she goes, and me hotfoot after her."

"Oh, that was the business that took you down there?"

"That was it. And it looked good, too. Right off the bat she nails this Judge Jeffries, a rich Kentucky lawyer and a horse-owner. And inside of twenty-four hours she has him goofy, jumping through hoops and rolling over to play dead at word of command. He's come East on account of a big lawsuit over some coal-lands, it appears, and she's so sympathetic that he spills all the inside dope on it to her. 'Curtain!' says I to myself. 'Show's over. Here's where she cashes in.'

"But at this point things began to get twisted. Everything was set for the push-over, but it didn't come. At first I couldn't make it at all. Then I saw what was gumming the works. She'd fallen for Jeffries as hard as he'd fallen for her.

"Perry Gabriel came down and saw the two of them together. Oh, boy! He was the picture of a vicious rat. 'You get that woman,' he says to me. 'If there's nothing against her, frame it.' Then he goes back to New York, never letting her know that he'd been there.

"Next day he telephones me to come to him, and when I get there he's grinning all

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

over his silly face. 'No need to do any framing, Bell,' he says. 'I've got the straight goods on her. You catch the first train to Kentucky and find out all you can about Caroline C. Logan.'

"'Who's she?' I asked.

"'The adopted daughter and residuary legatee of Woodson Logan, deceased,' he says, 'and the principal defendant in this suit of Judge Jeffries to recover those coal-lands. A mysterious lady, Bell,' he says meaningly. 'She's always represented in court by her lawyers, and no one else seems to know anything about her.'

"'Oh?' I says, beginning to see a light. 'What makes you think she's Mrs. Lee?'

"'Pretty plain, I call it,' he comes back at me. 'Why else has she been playing Jeffries? Then, too, the initials: 'C. L.'—Caroline Logan, Constance Lee. And, besides, I got a tip from Louis Beachey, who is Mrs. Lee's attorney. Now, don't stop to ask any more questions, but beat it for Kentucky.'

"Well, as you know, I went. But the more I dug round the less I liked the look of things. It came too easy. Everything pointed to Caroline Logan being Mrs. Constance Lee, and if she was, the woman certainly had a record all right. But still I wasn't satisfied. The evidence just fell short of an absolute identification of the two, and what I got might have been planted.

"I came back to New York and reported to Gabriel. 'Give me a week here to trail the lady and cinch things up,' I said, 'and I'll tell you for certain just what's what.' But that very day she lights out with Delia, her maid, and disappears.

"Judge Jeffries is as much at sea over it as any one. Him and her had been sitting pretty, taking in the theatres and restaurants, and out to the track together to watch their horses. She got him to put one of his colts under Jim DeVries, her trainer. But she never gave him a word that she was going, nor any one else, either."

"Not even Mrs. Hugo Wendell—Nannie Wendell?" put in Mrs. Bell.

"Not even to her. What it's all about, nobody seems able to guess. Maybe Beachey knows, but he's not telling. Gabriel thinks it's because she torpedoed Jeffries' coal case with the information he blabbed to her, and don't want to face him. Well, maybe that's it. But I told him not to be too sure. It ain't so dead certain yet that she is really and actually Caroline Logan. Could I hold him down?"—disgustedly. "Not that spiteful crane!

"What does he do this morning, without telling me what he's up to, but hunt for Jeffries out at the track and sling it into him that Constance Lee and Caroline Logan are one and the same? 'A highjacker, she is,' he says, 'and an adventuress, and she's double-crossed you to a fare-you-well.'

"Then, when Jeffries starts to come after him, he skips behind me and hollers for me to protect him. But, as I tell you, he got what was coming to him. You think I look like I'd been hit with a truck. You ought to see him. That Jeffries just naturally mauled him with everything in sight but the judges' stand. He's in bed now. And so"—Bell returned to the mirror for another examination of his bruises—"that's that."

"My! My!" Mrs. Bell was breathless. "And what's going to happen now?"

"Can't say." He shook his head gloomily. "Gabriel's spilled the beans, of course. But that's all the more reason I've got to go on. He's made an assertion he can't back up, and I've got to get the proof for him—if it's there to be found. I hate him like poison; but as long as I'm taking his money, I can't lay down on him.

"This afternoon," he continued, "I've got to hustle round and rake through Mrs. Lee's apartment. I've been there once before—the superintendent of the place is a sort of side-kick of mine—and didn't find anything; but I thought I'd take another try."

His wife clasped her hands on her chest.

"Oh, John," she pleaded, "can't you take me with you? I've never seen one of those society homes."

"I will not," he said stubbornly. "This is business. I've let you in on it already more'n I ought to."

But Mrs. Bell was the type of woman to whom a "No" is never final. She had long ago discovered that several of her husband's "Noes," could ultimately be translated into "Yes." And she acted accordingly.

"CHIEF, meet the wife."

Bell combined greeting and presentation as he ushered Mrs. Bell into the office of the Park Avenue apartment-house.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

He had already made arrangements by telephone with the superintendent for his visit of inspection.

The superintendent acknowledged the introduction, pushed forward a chair for the lady and then drew aside for a moment's private conversation with Bell, during the course of which a bank-note unobtrusively changed hands. Then he turned back to Mrs. Bell, his manner distinctly more affable.

"That was a great little idea of your husband's, bringing you along," he said approvingly. "Makes things look more on the level—if you get me. I can pass you off as parties looking for an apartment."

He followed this ruse as he led them toward the elevator, speaking rather loudly, for the benefit of the switchboard operator.

"No, ma'am; we haven't got anything so large vacant just at present. But, if, as you say, you don't want to move in until the first of June, I might be able to arrange it. There's a twelve-room on the eighth floor that I'll show you. It has just the same outlook as the one I'm speaking of, Jasper,"—to the elevator boy—"take us up to Eighty-six."

Mrs. Bell tried to assume the languid sophistication of a matron who would be seeking quarters in so exclusive an environment.

The apartment, when they entered it, showed signs of a hasty departure. In the library was an unemptied waste-basket stuffed with torn-up letters, notes and bills, which had overflowed to the carpet.

Bell turned this upside down and painstakingly went through the contents, but found nothing to reward him for his trouble. It was all surface flotsam—social communications, appeals for charity, the statements and receipts of tradesmen..

Meanwhile, Mrs. Bell and the superintendent were making a tour of the apartment. He opened the door of one of those chambers known to architects and builders as "master bedrooms."

"This is the maid's room," he said, "right next to Mrs. Lee's, with a connecting door."

"Why," Mrs. Bell exclaimed as she glanced round, "this is most as good as the one for the lady of the house!"

"Well, you see," the superintendent explained, "Delia's not exactly what you'd call a regulation maid, more like a confidential one. I guess there isn't much goes on but what she has a finger in the pie. Mrs. Lee relies on her to run things. She's that sort—a smooth article, I'll say. That's her picture hanging there by the dresser, across from Mrs. Lee's."

Mrs. Bell stepped over and studied the photograph; then she looked from it to the portrait of Mrs. Lee.

"Not hard to tell which is the maid, is it?" she said.

"Oh, I've always claimed that Mrs. Lee was class," agreed the superintendent. "That's why I never could believe that your husband was on the right track. Sorry for him—but all this searching he's doing is just time and labor thrown away. He won't find anything here. Shall we go back to the library?"

THERE they found Bell replacing the torn litter of papers in the waste-basket as he had found it. He met them with a gloomy shake of the head.

"Didn't I tell you so?" twitted the superintendent. "You bought a bunch of nothing this trip, old-timer."

Bell made no answer, but began pulling out the drawers of the writing-desk. He had gone over it thoroughly on his previous visit, but he intended overlooking nothing now.

For a few minutes he busied himself with a sheaf of canceled checks and the stubs of an old check-book; but presently he flung these back where he found them and began turning over a collection of old photographs. He ran through these rapidly until he came to the bottom of the pile, then, snatching up the last one—a bit of cardboard not more than two and a half inches square—stepped with it to the light. For a minute he gazed at it in silence, and then turned triumphantly to the superintendent.

"Bought a bunch of nothing, did I?" —tapping the photograph with his finger. "Well, let me tell you that I've got here just the one thing I was hoping I'd have the luck to find. This clinches all the proof I picked up out in Kentucky and gives me an air-tight case."

The other two were already staring over his shoulder at the photograph—a faded, cheaply taken print of two girls in institutional dress, who appeared to be about

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

fifteen or sixteen years old. Under one was written in ink the name: "Delia Clark," and under the other: "Caroline Logan."

"You see," he explained proudly, "when I was out there in the Big Sandy country, I dug up that this Caroline Logan, the heir to all that coal property, was a graduate from the state reformatory. When her time was up, so the story came to me, her folks had died and she had no one to look after her. One of the trustees of the institution was Woodson Logan, and finding out in talking to her that she was a distant relative of his, he offered to give her a home. She accepted, and in time he became so fond of her that he adopted her as his daughter and sent her abroad to be finished off. She was in Paris, it is said, when the old man died. That was during the war.

"Later, I verified the whole thing from the court records. It's there all right in black and white—legal adoption by Woodson Logan of Caroline Constance Wade—do you get that 'Constance'?—and her assumption of the name of Logan.

"Well then," he continued, "my next step was to see what I could find out at the reformatory. They had records there, too, naturally—an entry of her commitment as a juvenile deliquent, her measurements and description—not much to be gained from that except that she was fair-haired and blue-eyed—her marks for good and bad conduct and, finally, her discharge.

"All O. K. as far as it went, you understand; but I was still short of the connecting link to prove that Caroline Logan was Mrs. Constance Lee. I quizzed all the old-timers at the place—teachers and attendants—even hunted up some of the former inmates. What they told me went to bear out the theory that it was the same woman. They said she had been pals with a fellow prisoner by the name of Delia Clark, and admitted that the picture I showed them of Mrs. Lee, allowing for the passage of time and the different way of wearing the hair, looked a good deal like the girl they had known. But not a darned one of them would positively identify the thing.

"Then I asked if there wasn't a photograph of the girl at the time she had been at the institution. They said there ought to be one—the graduates of each year were always photographed in a group. But when we looked for it we found that it was missing. Trust her and Delia to have been shrewd enough to attend to that! Well, that pretty well cleaned up the Kentucky end of it; so back I came.

"I was dead sure now that Caroline Logan was Mrs. Lee. I doped it out that over there, during the confusion of the war, she had dropped the old name and taken on this alias. Then I could see how the tying-up of a good part of her income through this Jeffries suit might have driven her to blackmail; she'd need the mazuma to keep up with the crowd she was in. And two smart women like her and Delia, with Louis K. Beachey to back 'em, could easy pull it off.

"It all fitted together fine, like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. Any way I could figure, there didn't seem but one answer: Caroline Logan and Constance Lee were the same. But I still lacked that one little link of identifying evidence that would give me the legal proof of it.

"I seemed to be up against it for fair, but I didn't give up. There was still one hope. 'Twas a pipe that Delia and Mrs. Lee had swiped that group photograph from the reformatory; and I knew how women will hang on to old pictures of themselves. I thought, if I could just get in here and have the time to rummage through every hole and corner, I'd probably come across it. And you see"—he waved the faded photograph—"I was right. Here's the two of 'em cut right out of the group, and with their names written underneath. This settles it."

THE superintendent put on his glasses, and, taking the photograph from Bell's hand, walked over to the window.

"What are you talking about, you simp?" He looked scornfully at Bell. "That one there"—pointing to the figure on the left—"is Delia, all right. But if this other one, this Caroline Logan, is Mrs. Lee, then I'm an alligator."

"Not Mrs. Lee?" Bell grabbed the photograph. "You'd better get some new glasses. Or, maybe, it's the prison dress that throws you off. That, and seven or eight years off her age. Now, if you study this face from the eyebrows down——"

"Aw, how do you get that way? Why, this girl is a full head taller than Mrs. Lee. She's got a square chin, and the eyes are set different. Ask your wife."

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

They both turned at this suggestion of an umpire to settle the dispute; but Mrs. Bell was not in the room.

"Coming!" her voice, somewhat muffled, answered from down the hall in response to Bell's shout of, "Mamma!"

It was several minutes, though, before she appeared, carrying in one hand the framed photograph of Mrs. Lee from the wall of Delia's room, while the other hand was at her bosom, as if she had just tucked away something beneath her blouse. She seemed a little out of breath.

"Here; let's put the two pictures side by side," she said practically. "Then we can be sure."

She scrutinized the photographs, comparing them in every detail, then gave a slow shake of the head.

"You're wrong, John," she said crisply. "That girl in the picture never was and never will be Mrs. Lee."

Bell, in defense of his theory, would have argued all day with the superintendent, but his wife's decision was another matter. He had proved the accuracy of those lynx-eyes before.

"Well"—he covered his disappointment with an affectation of philosophy—"it only goes to show that when you're surest of a thing it's the time you're most apt to go wrong. This certainly puts me up a tree." Dejectedly he shoved the unlucky photograph into his pocket. "I guess there's no use bothering you any further, Chief. Come along, mamma!"

Outside on the sidewalk, they walked in silence to the corner. Mrs. Bell's face was thoughtful; she seemed to be turning something over in her mind. The detective was also absorbed in his reflections. At the corner he jerked his head toward the subway station a block to the east.

"You go on home, mamma. I've got a little errand across-town."

"Let me go with you, John."

"No; this isn't exactly a pleasure expedition. I've got to report this knockout to Perry Gabriel. He's sore already from the licking Jeffries gave him, and this won't make him any better-tempered. He'll know that he's apt to be cut in every club in New York if it gets out that he made such an accusation against a lady without anything to back it up—not to speak of a lot of other trouble it might cause him."

"That's not your fault."

"I know it; but Gabriel won't stop to think of that. He'll blame me for it, all right, and what he'll call me would blister the hide of an elephant."

He turned to go, but she stopped him.

"Wait a minute, John!" She seemed to be hesitating. Her hand, if he had noticed, still clutched her blouse. "Why don't you wait and see Gabriel to-morrow?"

"No use putting it off." He shook his head. "No; I'll go ahead and get it over with. And don't you worry, old lady. He can't do any worse than fire me."

He waved his hand and started across the avenue. She took a step after him, seemed about to call him back, then, compressing her thin lips, walked briskly to the subway.

WHEN Bell reached home, two hours later, she was at the door, anxious to hear the result of his experience.

"Oh, he gave me the air," he said curtly; "just as I expected."

"Was he nasty about it?"

"Well, he didn't spare me any." He brooded a moment. "Gosh! I'd like to get that low-life some way."

Mrs. Bell, her mouth a slit, went ahead with her preparations for dinner. Suddenly she came over and laid her hand on her husband's shoulder.

"John, I've got something to tell you. That picture you found this afternoon was a plant."

He stared at her.

"What do you mean?"

She laid before him the complete group photograph from which the square containing the two girlish figures had been cut.

"I noticed," she said, "when I looked at the picture you took from the desk, that the edges were fresh cut. I knew in a minute that a woman who'd go to the trouble to steal that group from the reformatory would never have left proof like that lying round where anybody could get it, with the names written on it. It was put there on purpose."

"Delia!" Bell thumped on the table. "She schemed that out."

"That's what I thought, too. So, while you and the superintendent were having it back and forth, I slipped out to Delia's room to see if I couldn't find the big picture that the little one had been cut out of.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Something told me it was there. And I know where women hide things like that. Sure enough, I came across it, folded into a lot of winter clothes in her bottom bureau drawer. And Mrs. Lee is in the group, all right. That's her—the fourth one from the end."

Bell thought of his recent unpleasant interview with Gabriel.

"Fine time to be telling me about it!" he said witheringly. "Why didn't you say something before?"

"I wanted time to think. And I've been thinking, too, good and hard."

"Well, keep on thinking." He started to get up. "I'm off. I've got to get over to Gabriel with this."

She held him down, both hands on his shoulders.

"You're not going to do any such thing!" she cried. "You're through with Gabriel. What you're going to do is to hitch up with the other side. Don't you think Mrs. Lee would be willing to pay well for what you know?"

"Oh, I can't do that, mamma!" Bell was shocked. "I never sold out a client in my life, and I never will."

"You're not selling anybody out. Gabriel's fired you. Don't go back to that hound, John. You've done enough of his dirty work for him. Get on the right side. Go with Mrs. Lee."

"The right side? Where do you get that? The woman's a blackmailer."

"She's nothing of the sort!"—defiantly. "Suppose she has been in a reformatory. Suppose there are some things about her that you can't understand. That don't prove anything. She's just being persecuted by this rotten Gabriel and others like him. Why, I knew it the moment I set foot inside of her home. That Delia—she might be up to anything. But Mrs. Lee? Oh, no!"

Her husband looked at her admiringly.

"You're a better detective than I am, old lady. And I'm pretty near betting that you're right. I've always had that sort of a feeling about her myself. Maybe," he went on reflectively, "it wouldn't be what Hulsberg calls 'unethical' to hitch up with Mrs. Lee. It would certainly be a whole lot nicer than working for Gabriel, and there's a lot I could tip her off to without giving any one away. By Gosh!" He straightened up. "I almost forgot. There's a scheme on, I'm 'most certain, to do her in some way. I don't know just what it is, but I think it's connected with her horses. I first tumbled to it listening in on a telephone conversation between Delia and Jim DeVries, and I got another lead on it this afternoon when I went to Gabriel's and came on him and DeVries together. DeVries was stuffing a check in his pocket as he came out, and I heard him say: 'You've got a sure thing on getting even with the big bruiser now, Mr. Gabriel'—that meant Judge Jeffries—'and you needn't be afraid of the lady interfering. She's safely stuck away for three months. I've got the low-down on that.

"Now, suppose"—Bell pondered—"suppose I should dig out what Gabriel and DeVries are up to and go to her with the information. That would be strictly professional. Nobody could say I'd sold out on that. But—shucks!" His jaw dropped ludicrously. "How am I going to find her to tell her? She seems to have crawled into a hole and pulled it in after her. Not even Jeffries can locate her, and he's been breaking his neck to do it."

He sat pulling at his ear, thinking. But he had not been a detective for twenty years without acquiring some skill at framing expedients.

"I've got it, mamma!" he exclaimed. "There's one person who, sooner or later, is going to wherever she is to see her. What I've got to do is to trail Louis Beachey."

THE bare red earth of the ranges was sheeted with the pink and purple of flowering rhododendrons, the rosy white of mountain-laurel. The grass edging the brooks was dotted with bluets. The maples and poplars were out in full leaf, and the cedars showed a livelier green. The spicy fragrance of sassafras and fern wafted out from every ravine. The air was full of bird-notes—the clear flute-call of the thrush, the harsher one of the blue jay. Against the trunk of a lightning-blasted oak a woodpecker tapped industriously. May had come to the Cumberlands.

On a great outcropping of rock beside a noisy mountain stream, Constance Lee lay, her hands behind her head, staring up into the branches above her. A slender, relaxed figure in riding-breeches and a khaki shirt,

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

she was, except for her bright head, almost invisible by reason of her protective coloration. But neither in outward decoration nor inward joy was she in accord with nature. There was no spring song in her heart; only a vast dissatisfaction with herself, circumstances and life. Her angling-rod lay near her, but she felt no impulse to employ it.

Eight weeks she had been away from New York, choosing for her self-elected exile these Kentucky mountains, where Jeffries would least dream of looking for her. He would never let her vanish as she had without turning many stones to find her—she knew him too well to doubt that. But this was surely the last place he would imagine her to be.

It was winter still in the mountains when she came, and at first the silence and the bleakness were soothing to her. She found the change from the luxurious to the primitive life stimulating; for she and Delia were practically camping out in Woodson Logan's rambling old log house, and there was plenty of occupation of a different sort from any to which she had been accustomed. Servants, even of the most untrained variety, were hard to get in this rugged region, and she had only one old man, who served as a hewer of wood and drawer of water, and there his accomplishments as well as his usefulness ended.

But as the spring came on and she could spend more time out of doors, Constance was stirred by the subtle influences about her; the earth resurgently green under the soft, misty rains, the cloud-vapors on the mountain-tops, the wild flowers, the fragrance, the mating-call of birds.

She had come here for two reasons—one, to escape Jeffries, and to wound him as much as possible in doing so; the other, to find peace and forgetfulness. And all this rapture of nature afire with life only roused a sharper, deeper remembrance of their days together.

She had determined to lock him out of her mind—the bolts and bars were strong, forged of her will and resolution. Yet he entered in spite of them.

His dark face; the cool, meditative eyes with that warm flash at the sight of her; his smile—no one else she had ever seen had just that sort of a smile—quick and proud and yet charming! Sometimes she felt that it was beyond endurance to be haunted in this uncanny way by a man she hated and had good reason to hate. It was not only the recent proof Beachey had given her of Jeffries' scheming against her and his double-dealing; there was an older and more hostile barrier than that between them—a bitter grudge of years, a memory that seared her soul and roused her to a passion of antagonism.

They had fenced together with the buttons off, and she had pricked him deep—to the heart. She was glad of that; and she would make him suffer still more. It was not the end between them; he should pay to the last farthing, and then add interest to that.

And yet—if only he had not made all other men seem stupid and uninteresting!

She drifted into a memory of their days at Atlantic City—and then sprang to her feet, scarlet with shame and exasperation. She stamped her foot on the rock and, picking up her cap and fishing-rod, started off. She would tramp until she was too tired to think, too dog-tired to do anything but sleep.

Leaping the little stream, she started briskly off across the ridge. But she had not taken a dozen steps before she stopped and looked round her perplexedly.

She had wandered farther than she had realized, and now she found it hard to get her bearings. All the familiar landmarks were gone.

The sun had disappeared. A shadowless yellow light from a coppery sky lay over everything. The leaves of the trees turned up white, like the bellies of dead fish in the heavy, lifeless air.

A storm coming on. A hurricane, perhaps. And she was lost!

STUMBLING as she ran, she climbed another hill and looked for some sign of shelter. Only an expanse of tree-tops. She began to get frightened. Great black clouds were rolling up from the west.

Then, as she topped another slope, she came upon an overgrown path, and saw, rising from a hollow below, a thin, filmy curl of wood smoke. She ran down through the trees to a little clearing with a tumble-down cabin in the middle of it.

A barking dog rushed out, snarling and showing his teeth, but she kept him off with

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The woman looked steadily at Constance. "Go back to yer true love, gal. Go back an' make it up with him. Or else the sun'll never shine fer yuh again."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

her rod. Big drops of rain had begun to fall. It had grown very dark, and a great sword of lightning flashed down, followed by a reverberating peal of thunder.

She ran to the sagging door of the cabin and beat on it with her fists. After a moment it was opened by an old woman, who stood surveying her with surly suspicion.

"What do yuh want?" she asked gruffly.

"Let me in!" Constance panted. "Don't you see the storm?"

The old woman peered into the gloom.

"Looks like we might have a mite of rain. All right"—grudgingly. "Come in an' set, ef yuh want to."

The door was hardly shut before the tempest broke. In those swooping gusts of wind, it seemed as if the flimsy cabin must be swept away. The tumult was tremendous, sheets of rain beating down on the roof, the thunder like a deafening ball of sound tossed from one mountain to another.

Constance, clutching at the seat of her chair, cowered in the darkness, for the interior of the cabin was like midnight, lit only by a tiny blaze from a few sticks on the hearth and the white glare of the lightning.

The old woman, apparently undisturbed by the racket, filled her pipe and calmly resumed an interrupted occupation—laying out playing-cards on a board across her knees. Drawn by curiosity, in spite of her tremors, Constance stepped over to her.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Tellin' my fortun'." She looked up, and her mouth fell open.

Constance had taken off her cap; and as the woman drew out a stick from the fireplace to light her pipe, the leaping blaze reflected itself in the red burnished gold of her braided hair.

"Blessed ef 'tain't a gal! What yuh doin' in them boy's clothes, gal? Hain't yuh got no modesty?"

Constance laughed.

"You wouldn't expect me to go roaming over these hills, and fish and shoot in skirts?" she asked gaily.

Her questioner sniffed.

"Wa'n't no sech goin's-on when I was a gal. Wimmen was wimmen then." Then, as if Constance had suddenly become an object of real interest to her, she looked at her closely. "Whar 're yuh frum?"

"The Woodson Logan place on Stony Creek. I own it now."

"So *yuh* are that woman?" The emphasis was unflattering. "The old Logan place." She twisted her shriveled lips. "Huh. I know all about that. Logan stole that place frum the Jeffrieses. My pap told me; he was a surveyor, an' he run them lines one time fer Tom Logan, Woodson's father. The Logans knowed they hadn't no right to it; but they kep' on holdin' it jest the same."

Constance threw up her head haughtily. She would not listen to anything that cast a doubt on her title to the property. This old hag was probably a witness bought up by Jeffries. She changed the subject.

"Could you tell my fortune?"

"Mebbe." It seemed to Constance that the eyes fixed on her so steadily were extraordinarily piercing. "Sure yuh want to hear it?"

THE question seemed to hold some meaning obscure and sinister. Constance shrank involuntarily, then rallied her courage. If it was a dare, she'd take it.

She nodded. Anything was better than a discussion of the Jeffries claim.

"All right, then." The mountain woman held out her clawlike hand. "Cross my palm with silver. Shuffle an' cut—cut 'em three times."

This done to her satisfaction, she breathed on the greasy pack, muttered something that sounded like an incantation, and then began laying out the cards.

She bent her head as she studied the spread. The firelight etched her witchlike profile grotesquely against the shadow. The effect was so eery in that dark cabin, with the storm raging outside, that Constance put up her hand to stop her before she began, and then drew it back.

The fortune-teller shook her head as she looked over the cards.

"Trouble! Trouble! Nothin' but black keerds round yuh, gal. Death an' destruction an' loss an' disgrace!"

Sometimes she raised her voice, and sometimes she mumbled so that Constance could not hear the half she said—could only catch words and phrases here and there.

"A true lover"—pointing to the king of clubs. "Save yuh ef yuh go to him—Crawlin' sarpints yuh think are yer true friends, but ain't. This queen o' di'monds an' the jack that's here with her— Most

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

of 'all, the jack o' spades that follers an' follers yuh—p'isens yer ears.

"Stay with 'em, an' all these troubles"—she waved her pipe over the array of black cards—"is bound to fall on yuh. That jack o' spades—he's closer 'n yuh think. He's smooth an' slick an' oily, an' bound to git yuh. But yuh give in to him, an' yuh'll rue it all th' days o' yer life. Beware of him, gal!"

Again the mumble was indistinguishable. The woman looked steadily at Constance.

"Go back to yer true love, gal. Go back an' make it up with him. Or else the sun'll never shine fer yuh again." She pushed the cards together in a heap. "There's more I could tell yuh, but I won't."

She craned her neck to peer through the window.

"Storm's over. But thar'll be another comin' soon. We're in fer a spell o' weather. Ef yuh wanter git back afore night to that place yuh've no right to, be movin'."

Thus dismissed, Constance curtly asked for directions as to the shortest way home; then, taking up her rod and laying some money on the table, she went out.

IT WAS an immeasurable relief to breathe the fresh air once more after having been cooped up in that stifling, smoky cabin. The rain was still falling, but gently; the landscape began to grow familiar. She was going home. She would get into dry clothes and Delia would give her hot tea and cakes. Thank heaven she had seen the last of that malevolent old creature!

She was hurrying up the path when she saw a man coming down it. She made a startled, convulsive movement. For a moment she had thought it was Jeffries—It was Jeffries!

She turned to fly back to the hut in the clearing. But his casual, moody glance had already fallen on those red-gold braids, her white face. In a few strides he was beside her.

"Constance!" There was amazed, incredulous joy in that first cry. "I have found you at last!" He caught her cold hands in his. "And here!" The joy was slowly blotted from his face, but still he held his ground against a doubt that he would not admit, would never admit unless she confirmed it. "Why are you here in the Cumberlands?"

She drew away her hands, her head tilting back, an insolent smile on her lips.

"You know."

The muscles of his cheeks contracted.

"I don't know"—sternly. "I never shall know until you tell me."

She gave the faintest shrug and began to walk rapidly up the path. It was a narrow, rocky one, but he kept abreast of her.

"Why are *you* here?" she asked.

"I have an appointment to meet Beachey in Cincinnati day after to-morrow, and before keeping it wanted to see some of your codefendants here along the creek."

"And I," she said distinctly, "am here at my own home—the Logan place."

The rain pattered on the leaves. The wind rustled the branches. When he spoke, his voice was strange to her.

"Then you really are Caroline Logan?"

"Of course I am!" She was contemptuously impatient now. "Why pretend? You've known it all the time."

"No"—dully—"I have not. I wouldn't believe any one else. Why didn't you tell me so yourself, there at Atlantic City?"

She was defiantly silent; he couldn't try those legal tactics on her, make her the defendant and put her in the witness-box for cross-examination. She refused to answer. He did not repeat the question. They were half-way up the slope before he spoke again.

"But why did you run away? Why should you have given me a blow like that when you knew I loved you? Even if Caroline Logan had gained for Beachey the knowledge of how I stood with the coal corporation, Constance Lee might have been kinder. Don't hurry so." He laid his hand on her arm. "You owe me an explanation, and I'm here to collect the debt."

"Your debt!" she said fiercely, and clenched her teeth to keep back a vitriolic stream of words. On an occasion, vividly remembered by her and long ago forgotten by him, she had learned how implacable he could be, but she had never imagined him capable of the duplicity he was showing now. Did he still think that she was ignorant of his setting a detective to watch her, of his code-telegram, his whole elaborate scheme to identify Constance Lee with Caroline Logan, as Beachey had revealed it to her? She pictured the scene between

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

them if she let her temper go. Accusations and counter-accusations—he denying to the last; she accusing to the last.

"I repudiate any hypothetical debt to you," she said icily. "If you want to prove its existence, you can take it to court with our other difficulties."

He looked down at her with an odd, unhappy smile.

"No court will adjust any of our difficulties," he said definitely.

She frowned over the enigmatic statement and groped for its meaning. But before she could question him he went on:

"You were badly advised." He spoke with a slow scorn that made her fingers tighten over her angling-rod and wish it were a riding-crop. "You would have done better if you had relied on your own wits. You underestimate your power. You might have told me frankly at Atlantic City that you were Caroline Logan, and I would still have confided to you how I stood with the coal corporation if you had asked me. The subterfuge was so unnecessary. You didn't have to resort to the methods you used and that Beachey, no doubt, advised. But if you have any idea that you are fighting me, put it out of your mind. I renounce all claim to the Logan coal-lands."

She stopped in her rapid walk and leaned against the trunk of a tree, her hands clutching at the bark. Her eyes were blazing.

"I mean it," he said emphatically. "I shall take the legal steps at once. The property is yours, unencumbered by any rights of mine."

"How generous"—the sneer was like a blemish on her face—"to make a gift to me of what is my own. If you are withdrawing from the suit, Judge Jeffries, it is because you know how absurd and iniquitous your claim really is, and you are afraid to have it shown up in the final court, where your influence doesn't count. Oh!" She was shaking with passionate indignation. "How dare you take such an attitude with me?"

"I dare more than that." There was a blaze in his eyes now. He dragged her hands from the rough tree-bark and pressed his lips first to one and then to the other. "That is for Constance Lee. And this for Caroline Logan." He jerked her to him, his arms close about her. "I wouldn't have dared with Mrs. Lee, but Caroline Logan is—different."

He kissed her again and again, and then his arms fell. She was free. She stood frozen, immovable, dumb. He picked up her rod and handed it to her. Her fingers mechanically closed about it, and without a glance at him she ran blindly up the hill.

REACHING the crest of the rise, Constance knew that in a moment she would be beyond the sight of Jeffries' following eyes. She felt instinctively that he was still standing there.

A few more steps and she was on the down slope. The house was in sight. But what was happening there? A buckboard stood before the door, and a figure in a raincoat was on the porch.

She paused and drew a quick breath. Beachey! Was she beset with hallucinations—persons popping up without rime or reason as in a nightmare? She had not expected Beachey. Why had he come?

She dropped down on a stone, feeling that she had not the strength to meet him. Never in her life had she so wanted to be alone. The emotional strain of the last five minutes had been more than she could bear. She was sobbing, and the tears were running down her cheeks.

But she could not stay out there in the woods. They would soon be organizing a searching party for her. There was nothing to do but carry on—meet Beachey and play the delighted hostess in such fashion as she could. Screened by the bushes, she could steal into the house by way of the kitchen, relieve Delia's anxiety and get into some dry things before she saw him.

She dragged herself up and, diverging from the path, cut across the vegetable garden and softly opened the kitchen door. As she entered, the sound of voices reached her from the living-room.

"Why, you know her, Mr. Beachey," Delia was saying, evidently in answer to some question of his. "She's the proudest thing on earth, and sore and bitter all the way through. She wouldn't see him or listen to him, not if he came crawling to her on his knees. Oh, no; you needn't bother about that. Anyhow, I've kept a pretty sharp lookout for him myself, like you told me to. Gee! He must have been in some state when she left him flat—wasn't he?"

Beachey's reserved tone was shot with sardonic satisfaction.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Hm! Yes. Orpheus certainly sought his lost Eurydice. You are perhaps not familiar with the allusion, Delia, but, although classical, it is apt. He sought her, if one might judge from his expression, through the length and breadth of hell. Then recently he came back to Kentucky."

"Kentucky?"—sharply. "Why, he might show up here any minute!"

"Just so. That is one reason for my visit. I think you and I must persuade Mrs. Lee to return East."

"Thank the Lord! I've had enough of these old mountains, and I guess she has, too. And he's the kind you've got to watch out for. Jim wrote me that he'd been out to the track and put him through a regular third degree more than once."

"Ah! You have heard from DeVries, then? But of course." Constance knew that when Beachey adopted that indifferent tone, he was alertly interested. "He has been more or less in Perry Gabriel's company. What is the game there?" He was wasting no subtleties on Delia. He came out with his questions flat.

"Perry Gabriel?" Delia was disappointingly astonished. "Why, Jim hasn't written me anything about it! What do you suppose he can be doing with him?"

"That"—dryly—"is what I hoped to learn from you. If you are holding anything back, Delia, you had better tell me at once, and save DeVries and yourself trouble. If he is trying to put over something with Gabriel without my knowledge, he will find himself in—well, rather a bad box."

"Oh, Mr. Beachey, I am sure it isn't anything like that! Jim's off the old line for good. He promised me. He——"

"Go on." The voice was iron sheathed in velvet.

"He—well, he's got some big scheme on. I don't know what it is, but it's straight. I'm sure it is. And he says it means a killing. He won't even tell me about it, except that it's a horse-deal. And if he's so thick with Perry Gabriel, that must be it."

"No doubt." He dropped the subject.

Constance knew that he had either gained the information he wanted or that Delia had convinced him of her ignorance of DeVries' plans. She heard him walk to the window.

"Surely she is not often out so late as this?" he said anxiously. "Hm. If she's not here in ten minutes I am going out to look for her."

He had done with Delia. There would be no further disclosures. And Constance, understanding this, roused herself to the need of immediate and concealing action.

Tiptoeing back to the door, she opened and slammed it, and ran across the floor, calling,

"Delia!"

Delia hurried out.

"Oh, here you are at last! What do you think?" excitedly. "Mr. Beachey's here!"

With a fine simulation of pleased surprise, Constance dropped her rod, clattering, to a chair.

"And look at me!" She was astonished at the naturalness of her voice. "See that he has everything he wants and tell him to make himself comfortable. I'll be down as soon as I can change."

She dashed up the stairs, and as Delia started to follow, waved her back.

"No, no! I'll do for myself. Mr. Beachey must be hungry, and I'm ravenous. You give all your attention to dinner."

ALONE in her own room, she stood clasping and unclasping her hands. She was crazy—she must be! The things that had happened to her to-day could not be true. Jeffries! That scene with him in the woods. His kisses still burning on her face. And now this. It was all monstrous and incomprehensible. Delia and Beachey! Surely a series of hallucinations. In a daze she unbraided her hair and began to dry it with a towel.

She had heard—heard with her own ears—Delia and Beachey discussing her private affairs. And the evident understanding between them showed that it was not for the first time. Delia, on whose fidelity she would have staked her life, was Beachey's spy, and Beachey, her guide and mentor, on whose worldly and professional knowledge she had relied so long and trustingly, had stooped to this indecent, indelicate prying.

It could not be! She must in some way have misinterpreted, misunderstood them. It was their way of protecting her. But how she resented that way! And what was this mystery about DeVries? His full attention belonged to her stable. And yet Delia

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

had just spoken of some scheme of his to make a "killing" of which she was ignorant.

Was all the world in a conspiracy to cheat and deceive her? Why were the two persons she had trusted utterly conniving and conspiring behind her back?

Although her anger grew more intense, her heart burned with pain. She wanted to sweep down to them like one of the Furies, tell them what she had overheard and drive them from the house. And she wanted to sob to them like a heartbroken child and beg them to tell her that she was wrong.

She had no idea how to meet the situation. But as she dressed, her cooler judgment asserted itself. She visualized herself confronting them, just as she had visualized herself confronting Jeffries, and foresaw the results—Delia protesting her devotion and justifying her motives; Beachey using all his plausibility to make the incident trivial and inconsequential—a few idle words between the maid and himself, indiscreet—he admitted it—and in rather bad taste, but prompted by his desire to protect her from annoyance, and surely forgivable.

The unexplainable, smarting something in their confidential manner, she would never be able to put into words—the feeling that Beachey was using her for his own ends and had in some way coerced Delia into helping him. She saw plainly that it would be futile to come out into the open in order to discover what she was determined to know.

But—she shut her white teeth—there were other methods of impelling confidence. Clay Jeffries had told her that she underestimated her powers. Well, at least she knew her power over Beachey. And she would use it mercilessly this evening—play Delilah until she had coaxed from him the secrets she wanted.

Just about to slip into a frock, she looked at it consideringly and discarded it, and searched for another more alluring. Of all times in her life she must look the siren to-night. She chose, finally, a filmy pale-green thing that fell away from her shoulders and brought out the whiteness of her skin, the red gleams in her hair, deepened the blue of her eyes and the feverish glow on her cheeks. She tried the effect of a wreath of glittery green leaves, and an etherial, entrancing witch looked back at her from the mirror.

She ran down the stairs and into the living-room. Beachey had heard her coming and was at the door to meet her.

"Ah-h!" He looked at her as if he could not drag his eyes from her. "Constance!" His voice caught.

She drew her hands away and moved over to the fire. He followed.

"Good Lord!" He passed his hand across his forehead. "You blinded me. You're no sight for a monkish old man." He stepped back and surveyed her with exaggerated awe. "Undine, just risen from some fountain in the forest! You must come away from this place at once; you can't go on growing more beautiful every minute."

"I've only begun," she said wickedly. "I'll be twice as beautiful when I've had my dinner. Now I am just a poor little starved wolf. Oh, Delia, here you are with the cocktails! Lift your glass high, Mr. Beachey. To the confusion of our enemies, the prosperity of our friends!"

She was so warm in her welcome that Beachey could not doubt her pleasure in seeing him again. And she was flatteringly cast down when he told her that he was leaving on the eleven-o'-clock train; he had a case coming on before the Federal Court in Cincinnati and had stopped over between trains to see her.

"And, by the way," he added. "I have to ask your forgiveness. Just before I started I found that a stupid clerk had forgotten to remail your letters. So I brought them with me." He was a shade too easy in his explanations.

"Forgive you? I thank you for not having bothered me with them before. I knew that I had left no loose ends which you could not gather up."

But she was wondering what motive he could have had in withholding her letters and bringing them to her now.

DURING the delicious little dinner that Delia served them, Constance insisted that Beachey do all the talking; she wanted to listen and ask questions. Had he seen Nannie Wendell? How was DeVries getting on with Joybells?

"You must come back and find out all those things for yourself," he said. "Seriously, after your escapade to-day I sha'n't be able to sleep nights. Go to some place

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Beachey came toward them. "Ah, Mr. Gabriel! DeVries! An unexpected pleasure to find you two here—and together." Both men were oddly flushed and embarrassed.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

on the coast, where you can enjoy yourself and where I can keep in touch with you more readily than I can here. I want you within call when this coal-lands case comes up. You agree, don't you?"

She nodded brightly.

"I'll leave in a day or two. I'm about fed up on the wilderness."

He showed his satisfaction, and was about to put it into words when he stopped with a sudden recollection.

"Oh, I have some good news for you. I was advised to sell that N. Y. P. stock of yours, and did so. It dropped five points the next day and is still tobogganing. You are twenty thousand dollars richer."

"Really? Why, Mr. Beachey, you are better than Santa Claus. I wish you came round with such news every day."

"I will, if you make a point of it." The long look that accompanied the words made them serious.

WHEN Constance rose, Beachey went over to his suitcase on the window-seat and took from it a quantity of letters. These he brought over and laid on the table beside her chair. One packet of them, separate from the others, was secured by a rubber band. She recognized Jeffries' handwriting. She pushed the whole heap aside.

"Thank you for bringing them," she said; "but I won't look over them now. You are only here until eleven." She smiled up at him engagingly.

He still lingered.

"These," he said, tapping the packet, "are from Jeffries, I think."

"Are they?"—glancing at them languidly. "What an impertinence!"

But to her, at that moment, the real impertinence lay in Beachey's having separated the letters and now standing guard over them.

"If that's the way you feel," he said, gathering them up swiftly, "let us dispose of them." He slipped off the band and held them toward the fire.

She suppressed a sharp expostulation, realizing that if she stopped him his jealous suspicions of her deeper interest in Jeffries would be confirmed and that he would be reticent for the rest of the evening.

"Burn them by all means," she said indifferently; and as he obeyed her she sat motionless, watching the paper curl and blacken, with a strange feeling at her heart. Her whole spirit rose up against this daring disregard of her rights, and she promised herself reprisals.

Beachey threw a fresh log on the fire and sank back in a deep chair, his coffee on the little pie-crust table beside him. He looked and felt thoroughly contented. The tricky ruse had not failed.

"Tell me," said Constance, when he had lighted his cigar; "are there any new developments in the coal-lands case? It is still set for June?"

"Still set," he replied; "but I have an idea that it won't come up. I have an appointment to meet Jeffries in Cincinnati on my present trip, and my suspicion is that he's planning to offer a compromise."

"In Cincinnati? He's in Kentucky, then?"

"Yes; he came out to attend a conference of politicians, I believe."

From the moment he had spoken of Jeffries she was aware that he was watching her, not yet fully convinced, in spite of the episode of the letters.

"If he wants to compromise"—Beachey pressed the tips of his fingers together—"I can probably effect a good settlement. But remembering what you said about making him bite the dust, I have hesitated. What do you think?"

She threw out her arms in a wide gesture, bending forward as if courtesying to him and looking up at him through her lashes.

"I am leaving it entirely in your competent hands. What does my poor judgment amount to?"

Beachey turned slightly in his chair and, resting his cheek on his hand, looked at her steadily. As he gazed, his thin, sallow face flushed, his eyes burned.

In this quaint, old-fashioned room, she seemed nearer to him than she had ever been before, and certainly more disturbingly, enchainingly lovely.

Suddenly she began to laugh—that gay, infectious laughter which was one of her greatest charms.

"You spend your life in reading other's people's thoughts, Mr. Beachey, and keeping your own in a secret vault with a patent lock. But I know the combination, and can walk in quite easily. You're still wondering if I did not, as Nannie Wendell would phrase it, fall more or less for Judge Jeffries."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Her sudden turning of the tables on him was disconcerting, but only for a moment.

"You are the wizard's daughter," he said. "I confess that such an idea did occur to me. But, my dear girl, wasn't it justified by your own actions? You were, you remember, to send me a report from Atlantic City, and you didn't do it—after you had the information you went to get."

"And you attributed that to sentimental reasons?" She was mockingly reproachful. "Can't you see that it was a point of honor? I thought that, no matter what his limitations might be, he was honest and, in a way, high-minded. He gave me his confidence, and I felt foolishly that I couldn't use it for my own advantage. One must have some illusions, some faith in human nature, if one is to live at all." Her face quivered. She was thinking not only of Jeffries but of Delia and Beachey as well. "And when I learned from you that he had had me shadowed by a detective— Mr. Beachey, how did you discover that the detective was hired by him?"

"By whom else?"

She noticed the evasion of a direct reply. Nevertheless, his question was unanswerable. Of course it must have been Jeffries. Still, she was almost sure of one thing: that he was drawing deductions and not speaking from certain knowledge.

"True," she said thoughtfully. "No one else would have had a motive for watching me. But how did Jeffries get his inkling that I was Caroline Logan? Have you any idea?"

"No."

Sitting here so negligently, smoking, he was yet on guard, and she knew it. The slight pause he always made before answering a question was the least bit accentuated. He was twirling a pencil in his fingers, and the veil of inscrutability had fallen over his eyes—sure signs that he had something to conceal. She pouted adorably.

"Louis, I am disappointed in you. I thought maybe some agent you had investigating his affairs had found that out."

She had never before called him by his first name. As she said it, it was a caress. The fever she stirred in him flamed through the torpidity of his eyes. He threw down the pencil and stretched out his hand to take hers.

"My dear child, I had no agents on this case until he went to Atlantic City—and then I sent you."

Her heart leaped, and then stopped. An admission at last—an admission that nullified all those other things he had told her.

Afraid that she might show her agitation and that he would notice some change in her expression, she rose and, moving over to the piano, began to play, humming under her breath. She wanted to cry out, "Then how did you know of that code-telegram you said he received in Philadelphia and which caused him to take the train I was on?"

His statements had been a tissue of falsehood, meant to separate her from Jeffries. People had warned her of Beachey. But she had never believed them.

HE HAD risen and was standing on the hearth-rug. By some trick of light the shadow of his face was thrown on the wall beyond her—a sharply etched profile, thin-lipped, predatory—the knave of spades! Her hands crashed on the keys. She shivered and, turning from the piano, came slowly back to him.

" 'Beside me, singing in the wilderness,' " he murmured. He threw aside all pretenses of friendship and showed openly his consuming passion for her. "Shut out from the world together. Constance, do you know what you are to me? The beauty of the universe, a strain of music always in my ears, the——"

She shook her head doubtfully.

"But you think strange things of me, Louis. That morning, in your office, you thought— What sort of man do you fancy I might most care for, anyway?"

"I don't know. Tell me."

"More than anything else, he must be a companion. And what companionship could I have with a man who has always lived above the experiences and struggles I have known? He, too, must have fought with the beasts at Ephesus, and suffered famine and shipwreck, and thrown away all finicky scruples to reach his goal."

A white flame of triumph swept over his face. He caught her in his arms, but she pushed him back.

"How far would you go for me, Louis?"

"To the limit—beyond the limit! I never stopped at anything yet to get what I wanted for myself. And for you—I'd wreck

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

the world. Once sure of you, Constance, I could go on and achieve anything."

"You'd lie and steal for me?"

His mouth twitched up at one corner.

"You haven't included murder and treason." He was crushing her hands in his. "Those, too—unhesitatingly. I'd smash the whole decalogue at once for you. Set me a task, my dear, which involves all those peccadillos, and I'll perform it."

"I know it, Louis. Oh"—with a glance at the clock—"there is the buckboard for you! You have just time to catch the train. Delia! Delia!" She called twice before he could stop her. "Gather up Mr. Beachey's things and put them in the buckboard. Good-by, Louis. I will see you in New York next week."

THE horses started. Constance, still forcing herself to smile, waved her hand. The buckboard passed from the radius of light pouring from the open door and was at once engulfed in the darkness. Constance turned to the stairs.

"Don't come up, Delia," she said. "I'm dead beat." Her feet were like lead; she could hardly drag them from step to step.

Locking her door, she began slowly to undress. As the green frock slipped to the floor, she looked down at it, and then, in a spasm of disgust, picked it up and hurled it to the farthest corner of the room.

Apathy submerged the temporary gust. She lay in her bed, past thinking or feeling, it seemed to her, sighing for the sleep that would not come. Instead, the whole procession of the day's events began to march before her—a dizzying, jumbled line, out of all regular formation. Now and then she fell into a sort of coma, and roused from it, wondering if she had slept and had a fantastic dream.

There seemed a crash of dissonant chords in her brain. And yet more and more clearly one definite theme sang above them. Jeffries had not lied. He had not played the cheap, shifty game Beachey had represented.

She thought of their meeting in the woods. She hated herself for the way she had treated him, and hated him for his rude and passionate good-by. But her face burned and her heart beat faster at the remembrance.

She thought of her evening with Beachey and writhed. It was she who had stooped, she who was unworthy, not Jeffries.

She rose very early in the morning and began a letter to him. She covered many sheets of paper, and then, stopping to read them over, tore them up. Her explanation sounded foolish and apologetic. Even if she had wronged him, she was in a measure excused by Beachey's misrepresentation of the facts. But there was no excuse for Jeffries' outrageous leavetaking of her.

She reached for a fresh supply of paper and began again—a formal line or two, asking if he could make it convenient to come and see her before she left for the East, as there was a matter of importance she wished to discuss with him.

This, too, displeased her. In making the request she humbled herself and imposed something on him. If she could only word the note so as to leave the burden of decision—to come, or not to come—with him!

She tried a different phrasing, but the effect was the same. She was about to throw her pen down and give up when suddenly an idea came to her—a pure-gold ingot of an idea which committed her to nothing and left him free to act as he chose. She had recollected the windfall of twenty thousand dollars that Beachey had mentioned the night before. Dipping her pen in ink, she wrote a check and then her letter:

MY DEAR JUDGE JEFFRIES:

My faith in your colt, Sleighbells, is so great that I am venturing to ask you if you will be good enough to undertake a commission for me, and place the amount of the enclosed check, ten thousand dollars, on him to win in the forthcoming Wide-awake Stakes at Latonia. Trusting that I am not asking too great a favor, I am,

Sincerely yours,
CONSTANCE LEE.

Folding the note, she addressed it to Beechlands and put it in her pocket, deciding to walk down to the village after breakfast and post it with her own hands.

Her eyes fell on the torn-up letters she had written, and she carefully gathered the scraps together and burned them in the fireplace. It was still too early for breakfast and, returning to the desk, she sat, her chin on her hand, looking out at the wet branches and listening to the drip of rain on the roof.

She felt utterly bereft and alone. She had never realized before how entirely she

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

depended on Delia and Beachey—and they had both failed her. At last she got up from her chair and, taking the sheaf of mail Beachey had brought her, went downstairs.

She pretended to be absorbed in this during breakfast. But although she drank her coffee she ate nothing, and Delia was quick to notice it.

"Don't you feel well this morning?" she asked solicitously. "You look tired."

"I am tired, and more than tired." Constance pushed the letters from her. "Delia, I want to tell you that I heard every word you and Mr. Beachey said last night."

Delia dropped one of the cups to the floor and stooped to pick up the pieces.

"I don't understand it," Constance continued. "I never shall understand it. Does Mr. Beachey pay you to spy on me and report to him? You might as well tell me everything, for I mean to know just how far this thing goes."

Delia began to cry.

"I never spied on you, never! Mr. Beachey said that you were in a terrible position and he didn't want you bothered by that Jeffries man. He said that it would be helping you if I let him know everything that came up."

"I don't think I've ever given either you or Beachey reason to treat me as a child."

"He said you were in danger. Why, Mrs. Lee—Connie—I've always taken care of you since we were girls together. I'm older. You know I wouldn't do anything to hurt you. You've just about killed me, asking if I'd taken pay for—for spying on you."

Constance leaned back in her chair. Delia was merely Beachey's tool. It was idle either to blame her or to try to rouse in her any feeling of culpability.

"Very well," she said coldly. "We'll say no more about it. But if you try to play watch-dog for Beachey again, you and I will have to part. Now, what is this scheme of DeVries' that you were speaking of?"

Delia's sobs increased.

"I don't know anything about it. I told Mr. Beachey I didn't. All I know is that the day we left New York Jim telephoned me and said that we'd be married and go to Havana next winter and that I'd be wearing diamonds."

"I see." Constance picked up her letters and moved away from the table. She stood at the fireplace, her foot on the fender, frowning over the puzzle. "Well, I guess the sooner I get back to my stable the better."

WHETHER or not her suspicions of DeVries were justified, she knew that during her absence the trainer had had an unusually free hand.

Toward the end of April he had taken Mrs. Lee's string of horses, including Joybells and Jeffries' Sleighbells, to the West, as all his engagements before the August meeting at Saratoga were in that territory.

Joybells had made a fair showing in one or two starts at Lexington—nothing sensational. It was DeVries' policy, as he explained in his reports to Mrs. Lee, to hold the horse more or less under cover, giving him just enough racing to keep him on edge for a dramatic comeback at Saratoga. And, so far, his performances had been satisfactory and encouraging.

But the trainer's reports to Jeffries on Sleighbells were not so cheering. He complained that, although the colt was in fair condition, the animal was showing signs of the same temperamental fault that characterized his brother, Joybells—the same lackadaisical unwillingness to try. On the two occasions that he had faced the barrier he had been spiritless and indifferent, and, in DeVries's opinion, his chances for the Wide-awake, the big juvenile stakes at Latonia, which Jeffries had set his heart on winning, were unquestionably thin.

After the colt's second defeat in a field of mediocre quality, Jeffries, who had come to Lexington to see the trial, looked up DeVries in the paddock.

"We might as well retire that fellow," he said curtly. "He hasn't got it in him."

DeVries rolled his gum in his mouth.

"Oh, I wouldn't take snap judgment," he temporized. "He might come round and surprise you yet, Judge."

Jeffries was skeptical. He was not in an optimistic mood. For weeks, bad luck had been his shadow. Fate had loaded her dice, and they had fallen steadily against him. The whole chain of events was mysterious and perplexing—the inexplicable disappearance of the woman he loved, the coal-corporation's equally inexplicable withdrawal of support. Even in politics an unexpected opposition had developed, and

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

he discovered that the campaign was going to be more expensive than he had thought. And now the disappointment of finding that the colt, which had given promise of being a phenomenon, was only a dud!

He took the successive blows standing, and, although haggard, met the world smiling, carrying the same easy air of victory that he had always worn. But turning the matter of Sleighbells over in his mind, he looked glum.

"After what I've seen to-day, DeVries, he'll have to come around considerably to have a chance in the Wide-awake," he said shortly. "Ship him back to Beechlands."

DeVries realized that he had gone too far. He had a settled plan, and Jeffries mustn't be allowed to interfere with it.

"Oh, look here, Judge," he urged hastily; "don't do that just yet. We're through here this week, and I'd about made up my mind to lay off the Louisville meeting, anyhow—got nothing just right for what's there—and move my string over to the old Oakley track to get ready for Latonia. I'll have a chance then to try out a theory I've got in regard to this colt and maybe clear up what's ailing him. If it works, we might land the Wide-awake even yet. And, meanwhile, it won't cost you a cent unless I make good."

"You're crazy, DeVries!"

"No; just interested. And I've got enough faith left to gamble my services and a month's feed bills that I am right. How about it, Judge? Shall we let things ride until Latonia opens, and see how we make out? Just give me a free hand for a month, Judge. Trust this youngster entirely to me. I bragged that I can handle the Bonny Bells get, and I want to prove it."

Jeffries was rather touched. The Bonny Bells colts meant a great deal to him, and DeVries' faith in them was heartening. There was wistfulness as well as disappointment in his eyes as he looked at the splendid two-year-old which had just disgraced his colors.

"Very well," he said; "have it your own way. You needn't be afraid of any interference from me"—recalling his political engagements. "I shall be too busy for the next month even to think of a race-track. Take Sleighbells with my blessing, and if, by a miracle, you should succeed with him, no one will give you fuller credit than I."

He shook hands and turned back to the club-house. DeVries, with a canny smile on his hard, weather-beaten face, watched him until he disappeared from the paddock, and then left the track to look up the railroad agent and make arrangement for the shipment of his horses.

TWO days later he was comfortably quartered with his outfit in the line of stables at the back of the Oakley race-track on the outskirts of Cincinnati—a spot well chosen for his purpose, free from interference, since there were practically no other horses there at the time, and so conveniently near Latonia, on the other side of the Ohio River that, when the time came to move there, he could jog his charges over without any of the nervous fret incident to a railroad journey.

If there was anything in his plan of schooling Sleighbells in seclusion, conditions could not have been better. And yet, after they were settled, he pursued a course which he would have found hard to explain to Jeffries.

He left the colt which he was supposed to be training for the Wide-awake almost entirely to his assistants and devoted all his time and attention to Joybells.

An expert would have said that, in view of the fact he had no immediate race in sight, Joybells was being trained too fine. The stable-hands didn't hesitate to comment on it among themselves.

But DeVries permitted no criticism from his staff and followed his own peculiar methods. He would often have the two horses worked together, and as he noted their similarity in that high, dancing step and the forward thrust of the head, a gleam of avid satisfaction would come and go in his narrow, squinting eyes.

He spent hours in experimenting with toe-weights and boots and bandages, so as to make Joybells on the next test conform more closely to the younger horse's loose, less practised stride.

As the date neared for the opening of Latonia, his attention to the one horse and neglect of the other increased. Any one would have been justified in concluding from his attitude that it was Joybells who was a candidate for the Wide-awake and Sleighbells who was being reserved for the later contests at Saratoga.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

He even routed Uncle Ike, the dean of the stable-hands, out of his quarters back of Joybells' stall and slept there himself. And late at night, when the crap-games were over and the swipes had all bedded down in the straw, he would steal in on the sleeping horse with a lantern and, hanging a blanket over the door, engage in certain mysterious rites.

One night a stable-boy, returning late from town, had his curiosity excited by a flicker of lantern-light from the dark stall—DeVries for once had been careless—and had peeped through a knot-hole. Inside he saw Joybells tethered in such a way as to make protest impossible, while the trainer seemed to be performing some sort of dental operation on his mouth.

But the boy was a cocaine addict, called "Snowbird" about the stables; so when he told his story the next morning he was merely accused of having taken one sniff too many.

Uncle Ike had an experience, however, a day or two later, which roused more attention.

While valeting Joybells out in front of his stall one morning, he paused suddenly as he ran his currycomb down toward the horse's slender pastern and let out a squawk.

"Hey, boss! Come yere!" he called excitedly to DeVries, who was standing not far away. "Is my eyes failin' me, or whut is it? Dis yer hawss oughter have fo' w'ite stockin's. Dat's de way I allus tell him from Sleighbells, w'ich has on'y th'ee. An' now look! Dat off hind laig has tu'ned yaller, jes' like his brotheh's. Ain't no diffrunce now betwixt 'em, not no mo' 'n dey is 'twixt——"

"Shut up, nigger!" DeVries caught him by the shoulder and gave him a jerk which sent him a dozen feet away. "Better cut out that bootleg gin, Ike." He pulled himself together and gave a forced laugh. "I've noticed that those old lamps of yours are getting sort of twisted lately. S'pose you chase yourself over to the pump and wash 'em out with some salt and water—then maybe you'll see plainer. Go on now, and leave your rag and bucket with me. I'll finish with the horse."

When Uncle Ike came back, the illusion which had so startled him had disappeared. Joybells, as DeVries pointed out, had now his customary four white stockings.

"Don't let anybody else hear this foolishness, Ike," he warned, "or they'll sure think you're going bughouse. And I want you to stick round this stall pretty close to-day, too. I've got to go to town, and I don't want Joybells pestered in any way—he's too nervous. If any one comes nosing round, you shoo 'em away."

Uncle Ike, being only human, confided the trick his vision had played him to a crony, and the tale, circulating through the stable, eventually reached the Snowbird, who, later in the day, eeled his way in at the back of Joybells' quarters while Uncle Ike nodded at the front door.

Among other things, he found stuffed into a crevice the yellow-stained rag which DeVries had used that morning in cleaning the horse, and also hidden on a shelf a bottle of chestnut dye.

WHILE the curious Snowbird pried into his secrets, DeVries sat in the lobby of a Cincinnati hotel, holding a low-toned conversation with Perry Gabriel—so low-toned that it was tantalizing in the extreme to a scrunched-up figure with a derby hat pulled down to his ears who had maneuvered himself to a position on the other side of a pillar and was trying vainly to overhear what was said.

It was due to no foresight or detective acumen that John Bell was present at the interview. He was following another trail; and no one could have been more surprised than he when, looking up from his newspaper, he saw Gabriel and DeVries meet.

But he was not one to overlook a gift of the gods so adventitiously tossed in his lap, and at once he began to work his unobtrusive way toward them. Yet, as already said, he gained little for his pains. Strain his ears as he might, he could catch only an occasional detached word or phrase. Once, Gabriel raised his voice querulously.

"Can't you put it through on less money? The odds, you say, will be as good as twenty to one."

"Maybe they will; maybe they won't," DeVries said stubbornly. "You never can tell. S'pose a hint should get out and there'd be a heavy play at the track. Down the price would go. There's already some whispering among those niggers of mine. I'm going to put 'em wise to-night and let 'em clean up on the race. That'll keep their

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

mouths shut. But, all things considered, I figure we'll be lucky if we get the money down at an average of ten to one. Besides, Mr. Gabriel, what difference does it make? You ain't really risking anything—just lending 'em the jack for an hour or so. This is a sure thing, I tell you. Come out to the barn with me and see for yourself."

"No, no!" Gabriel's tone was panicky. "I can't be mixed up in this in any way—no connection with it, that could possibly come out. That was the reason I didn't want you to come up to my room, but to see me here in the lobby as if we'd met by accident. Now, as to putting out this money—" His voice dropped again, and Bell could catch nothing further.

They talked on a few minutes longer; then, as an elevator door clanged open on the other side of the lobby, Bell heard a stifled gasp—"Good God!"—from Gabriel, and, peeping round his pillar, saw Beachey emerging from the car.

"Hell!" muttered DeVries, almost as much shaken. "What's he doing here?"

But the lawyer's appearance was no surprise to Bell. He had followed Beachey all the way out from New York, except for one brief interval when he had found his man missing from their train after it had left a little junction up at the eastern tip of Kentucky. Even then, he was not long in putting two and two together. The junction, as he knew from his previous visit to this locality, was the point from which a little branch road wound off up into the mountains, with a station near the Logan coal property, and he immediately drew the conclusion that Beachey had gone there to see Constance Lee. This was the hiding-place she had chosen—her old home back in the Cumberlands.

There were, of course, a dozen other plausible reasons that might have led the lawyer to stop over for a run up to the disputed tract; but Bell was sure he was right.

From the next stopping-place he hurried back to the junction; but while he was waiting for a train out up the branch, Beachey returned on an incoming one and crossed over to the main-line platform with the evident intention of taking the west-bound express due in five minutes.

This threw Bell into something of a quandary. Should he undertake what might be a wild-goose chase up the branch, or should he for the present hold to the trail of the lawyer and come back to investigate the possibilities of the Logan tract later on?

Obviously, the latter was the wiser course, and therefore he followed Beachey on board the express, left it with him at Cincinnati the next morning, and having seen him to his hotel, sat down in the lobby to wait further developments.

IT WAS at this point that, peering round the corner of his newspaper, he was startled at seeing the meeting between DeVries and Gabriel. At first he could hardly believe his eyes; then the suggestion came that possibly they were here to confer with Beachey. But their manifest consternation at the sight of the lawyer quickly undeceived him on that score.

Beachey, as he stepped from the elevator, was probably as astounded to see Gabriel and De Vries as they were to see him. But beyond a slight start, which might have been assumed, he gave no hint of it.

His filmed glance rested upon them for a moment, and then he came toward them.

"Ah, Mr. Gabriel! DeVries! An unexpected pleasure to find you two here—and together." He was never more bland, and yet both men were oddly flushed and embarrassed. "Rather a far cry from Broadway, isn't it, Mr. Gabriel?" he asked pleasantly.

"Rather." Gabriel gave a poor imitation of a man completely at ease.

"Mr. Gabriel's out for the opening at Latonia," DeVries broke in. "We just ran into each other a minute ago." He swallowed, as he saw Beachey's eyes drop to the cigarette stubs and ashes strewn about Gabriel's chair. "Er—that is, only a few minutes ago. He's been asking what I think of my prospects for the meeting."

"Naturally," Beachey nodded. "And what *do* you think, DeVries? Now I"—with a smile—"take very little interest in racing; and yet down here in this atmosphere my Kentucky blood asserts itself."

He drew up a chair and sat down.

"I am here on a case in the Federal Court which will hold me until next week. I should have arrived last night, but I decided to run up to the old Logan place, and that delayed me." He was looking directly at DeVries as he spoke, and the trainer's

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

muscles jerked in spite of himself. "However, that is immaterial," Beachey continued. He had the air of a man who, out to kill time, had met two agreeable acquaintances and meant to stick by them. "What I started to say is that since I will be here over Saturday, I also might use a little inside information. Anything good for that afternoon, DeVries?"

"Well, I don't know. I wouldn't like to give an opinion." DeVries eased his collar. "Got nothing of my own except in the Wide-awake, and two-year-olds are always an uncertain quantity."

He twisted in his chair. Beachey's eyes were on him, a saturnine twinkle in them. DeVries shot a sidelong glance at Gabriel; but his backer showed no disposition to respond to the S. O. S. call.

The trainer's thoughts were becoming more confused every second. Beachey had been at the Logan place. He had seen Delia. Mrs. Lee might have asked him to go out to the Oakley Stables. If he did, he'd be sure to look over both Joybells and Sleighbells. The contingencies frightened DeVries. He lost his head.

"Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Beachey"—he fished for a fresh piece of gum—"just as I've been giving it to Mr. Gabriel here, I have got a possible sleeper—this colt of Judge Jeffries' in the Wide-awake. He's made a poor showing so far, and there's bound to be a long price against him. But I think I've got him about right, and—I'll slip it to you in confidence—I'm out to win."

"A colt of Judge Jeffries', eh?" said Beachey thoughtfully.

"Yes, sir; Sleighbells, by Bonny Bells, out of Fawnette. But for God's sake don't breathe a word of it to anybody. And if you decide to put a bet down, don't do it at the track. Just let me know how much you'd like to risk, Mr. Beachey, and I'll see that it's placed for you."

"And you really think it's worth a gamble? You know I don't like to lose, DeVries. How high would you advise me to go—five dollars or five thousand?"

"As high as you like," said DeVries reluctantly. "You can't go wrong on this baby."

"Then, let us say twenty-five thousand. And as I shall probably not see you again, may I not ask you and Mr. Gabriel to put up the money for me? Now"—rising slowly, oblivious to the anguish and dismay that his thinly veiled extortion had caused—"I am afraid I shall have to ask you gentlemen to excuse me. But, like the witches in 'Macbeth,' we three shall meet again, 'when the hurly-burly's done, when the battle's lost or won.' And you will note, too," he mused mirthfully, "how appropriately the quotation goes on: 'Paddock calls anon. Fair is foul, and foul is fair.' "

He waved his hand affably to the two stricken conspirators and moved on.

"You damned jackass!" snarled Gabriel. "What the devil did you tell him for?"

"Tell him?" DeVries was still sweating. "He knew. Didn't you hear him say he'd been to— Well, anyhow, he knew. You can't keep anything from that bird."

"And he expects us to put up twenty-five thousand for his account?"

"Sure he does! And if it loses we're out. You'd never get it back from him."

Gabriel exploded.

"I'll be damned if a cent of mine goes——"

"Then you can count me out of the deal right now. I wouldn't cross him—not for ten times the money I expect to get out of this thing."

BELL slipped away from his shielding pillar and, leaving the two still wrangling, edged his way out of the hotel. Slightly stunned by the value of the information he had gathered, he wanted to mull it over a bit, coordinate his facts and then decide on his course of action.

He strolled about the streets, thinking. His first conclusion was that it was no longer necessary to watch Beachey—he would be in Cincinnati for the rest of the week. Next, his suspicion that Mrs. Lee was at the Logan place had been confirmed. His impulse was to take a train back to the Cumberlands and have an interview with her.

But here his professional pride came in. He could tell her that her trainer was involved with Perry Gabriel in some shady transaction of the turf—a transaction of such magnitude that they were willing to let Beachey hold them up for twenty-five thousand dollars. But he could give her no details, and Bell liked his reports to be explicit and exact.

Why, he asked himself, wasn't it possible to make this one so? DeVries' headquarters were at the Oakley track; it was

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

surely worth the short journey out there on the chance of picking up a clue.

"In a crooked stable," he philosophized, "the crowd is mostly crooked. There'll be somebody I can buy up. The only thing is to find the one that's got a grouch."

He took a taxi and went out to the track, and, arriving there, was properly cast down to find that Mr. DeVries was in town for the day. He loafed about and ingratiated himself with the stablemen.

The Snowbird's failing, he had recognized at a glance, and, professing the same weakness, it didn't take him long to get on confidential terms and learn that the boy's stock of white powder was distressingly low. With promises of a further supply and the additional salve of a twenty-dollar bill Snowbird readily revealed all he knew.

"Yeah"—with a cynical cock of the head—"the boss 's got a hen on all right, even if the rest of these boobs round here ain't fell to it. Why"—he dropped his voice—"DeVries is workin' over that old skate every night. He's paintin' him up and filin' off his teeth and——"

"Filing off his teeth?" Bell exclaimed. "What's that for?"

"So as to make him look like a two-year-old. Don't you know that hawsses grows a ring on their teeth for every year, just like a tree? Why, say, pardner; DeVries's got that Joybells lookin' so much like Sleighbells that no one can tell the two apart. He's fixin' to run the old dog in Sleighbells' place in the Wide-awake. A good five-year-old is bound to beat a field of youngsters; don't you see?"

"Oh a ringer?"

"You said it! A ringer. There'll be one grand little clean-up, I'll tell the world."

Bell had nothing to go on but the word of a coke fiend and the slender evidence of a yellow-stained rag. But, after the conversation he had heard in the hotel lobby, he was sufficiently convinced to take the first train to the mountains.

Next evening, as Perry Gabriel was dressing for dinner, DeVries burst into his room. Gabriel faced about savagely.

"Didn't I tell you not to come round me?" he snapped. "I can't afford——"

"Hell!" DeVries' face was a sickly yellow; he had a telegram in his hand. "No time for that now. Do you know a detective named Bell? Well"—as Gabriel nodded—"he's got to Mrs. Lee up at the Logan place and spilled the whole works. Told her what we're up to. And the two of them are starting for Cincinnati to crab the game."

"How do you know?" Gabriel steadied himself by dropping a hand to the dresser. "Is it straight?"

"Wire direct from Delia." He held out the telegram. "What are we going to do. They'll be here to-morrow morning."

Gabriel read the message, then crushed it in his hand.

"And a hundred thousand of my money out!" His twitching face steadied and grew dark. "By God, they've got to be stopped!"

"How?"

"How? Hell's bells! You can get anything if you pay for it. Wreck a train—burn a bridge—anything! I say—that woman sha'n't get here!"

As you will guess, the next instalment of "Thoroughbred" is a very thrilling one. See October EVERYBODY'S—out September 15th.

A New Serial

A VIVID, colorful story, "Kildare of the Border," laid in a critical period of American history, begins in October. It is by *John T. McIntyre*, whose recent novel, "Blowing Weather," is one of the best and most popular books of the year.

October *EVERYBODY'S*—out September 15th

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

In *the* Descendent

You've Met People Who Made You Happier, More Kindly Disposed. So Will This Tale of a Boy, a Man and a Dog

By Bonnie Ginger

Illustration by Joseph A. Maturo

THE habit began when, in the first part of May, I moved my office from below to above City Hall Park, and I suppose the cause was my own obstinacy, since I refused to think of changing my lunch-place. The new route I must now pursue to the restaurant took me past St. Paul's chapel, and it was on the return trip that I stepped into the yard one day, and after that each noon found me there after my enforcedly frugal meal.

"Eat simply and then stroll about the streets for half an hour," Doc had ordered, and, to mollify me, had called me "young man," though I'm a year older than he—that is to say, I'll never see forty-six again.

"Stroll about in *that* neighborhood?" I cried. "Have you ever been there? Do you know anything about down-town New York? Say—a fine doctor you are, telling me to eat a soft-boiled canary-egg on a leaf of lettuce and then *stroll* in the financial district at one-thirty P.M.! What shall I wear—a suit of mail or just an ordinary football outfit?"

Nevertheless, when I found I could walk about the chapel yard, I knew his advice had been good.

To avoid the specters of forbidden viands, I had got into the way, as I wandered there, of musing on the ghosts of our forebears, or rather, their gravestones, since at midday ghosts do not walk. Certainly they would have shunned their well-known exercise on this particular midday of the last day but two of a month that had been obdurately icy until now, when at her departing hour spring upset the entire bucketful of warmth and sun which she should have distributed over the vanished weeks.

My favorite bench, if I chose to occupy one, was at the far corner where the big yard sloped down against the bulwark of the parish-house. And though the Doc had told me to walk, not to sit, yet my sitting constituted obedience to his secondary command—to interest myself in something besides my business, of which he imagines I think too much. "Get an outside interest, Martin," he had ordered, and here it was, except that it was an inside interest, since its object was the tenant of a tomb—the tomb of Rochefontaine, of whom so much is said here and of whom so little is known elsewhere.

My interest in it began as an esthetic preference for the crude and dilapidated simplicity of that tall rectangle of white sandstone, beautifully grayed and creamed, and still faintly sparkling in this bright sunlight. A pedestaled urn surmounted it. From this corner it was a fine object, small and distinct against the old brown chapel which, in turn, stood out small and distinct against the sky-scrapers all about.

Drumming up my French, I had made out the scanty history of Étienne Marie Bechet, Sieur de Rochefontaine, born in the middle of the eighteenth century in the town of Ay, in Champagne. A minor Lafayette, but surpassing Lafayette in one respect, since he remained in the new land, and held the chair of artillery instruction at West Point, whence he retired at sixty

Copyright, 1923, by Bonnie Ginger.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

years of age. That was all, and a far too meager all—not as to his military career but as to his private life, particularly after his retirement. For sixty is very early—is it not?—for retirement. So active a man would have had "outside interests"—and there must have been a family life and descendants. I wanted to know more about his descendants. I had questioned the chapel employees and waylaid the verger and interviewed the rector, but they could not enlighten me. No one, so far as they knew, had ever visited the tomb in the character of a descendant. They could but direct me to the Historical Guardians Society, whose president, in fact, I was to interview this very afternoon, for I was determined to unearth whatever their archives might contain.

I don't know why I was so eager for the *sieur* to have descendants—except that the tomb struck me as somehow very lonely—a lonely ending to so fine and brave and charming a man as this inscription testified he had been. I wanted to feel that some one came here and said, with pride and respect, "Here lies my ancestor." I wanted this man to be connected with the present, who had done so much for it in the past.

AS I sat there, the sexton—who, by the way, was a new one—approached with a sheaf of little flags, one tricolor among them, which latter emblem he placed by this *tombeau* together with the American flag. The hues were bright against the grass and the two barberry bushes—so bright that the colors and the dazzling sun did something to me. They sent me into a doze. Now, I had never before dozed on that bench, nor did I feel at this moment any inclination for sleep. Altogether, this nap had a strange, mysterious flavor about it—a matter of which I was convinced when, on waking, I saw a dog sitting on the Sieur de Rochefontaine's grave.

What dog? Ah, that was it! What dog? I rubbed my eyes, but there was no one to interrogate but an old man, sound asleep, away yonder in the chapel porch. Yet here sat this animal, erect, in profile, behind the tricolor—of the same shade as the cream-gray sandstone, but permeated by the grime of the city—predominantly fox-terrier, with minor honors going to spotted coach-hound, bird-dog and bull, and a whole gold medal for dachshund, the strain that supplied his short squat legs, and gazing fixedly into Fulton Street down below the railings.

In sheer amaze, and not as a signal, I whistled. He turned, mistaking my expression, and, disregarding the imagined summons, surveyed me from somewhat prominent and very beautiful brown eyes. But when I approached him, he quietly and firmly snubbed me.

"I beg your pardon, dog," I said, "but I was wishful, as an habitué of this place, to tender a greeting." I got no further, but stopped short, rebuffed by his steady gaze, which said, "You *seem* to be a gentleman." He intended me to understand that his vigil was private. Discouraged, I studied him as he again turned his close attention to the street. I now noticed a leanness, as of recent abstinence from food. At this moment the new sexton came up.

"Where'd *he* come from?" he demanded, not of me but of the dog. But when the dog turned those calm, beautiful eyes on him, his truculence vanished. "Well, well!" he said to me. "Is he yours?"

"No; he must be lost. He has no collar."

The sexton scratched his head and whistled. Again the dog mistook the sound. His intent gaze at the sexton was one of aloof patience. "You are a little slow to take a hint, but—" it said, and indeed the sexton was so impressed that he made his next remark in a definite aside.

"Pore little feller—but of course he can't stay here."

"Haven't you seen him before?" I asked.

No; he had never seen the critter till this minute. Or any other canine.

"You see, 'tain't like other neighborhoods. This here's the finanshul districk, and you hardly ever see dogs here, except it's some swell-breed dog in an automobile."

I asked him what he would do with this particular dog, and he reflected and said,

"Well, if the little feller's still here at five, I'll have to shut him out; but if the verger don't get after me for it, I'll let him hang round till then, and mebbe his owner'll come and find him."

The words "at five" reminded me I was overdue at the office. I handed the sexton a dollar bill.

"See here; can't you get him a sandwich or something across the street?"

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The sexton grinned, and as I departed I addressed our canine with a "So long, and good luck!"

At that he looked at me, and I saw in his brown eyes a sad wistfulness, as if he asked, "Is there such a thing as luck?" and it came to me that he was a very lost and lonely little feller, indeed.

I was the more sympathetic toward him because only lately I had lost my young mastiff, Nick, one of the most lovable animals I had ever owned, and I have owned many.

Before five that afternoon I was at the office of the Historic Guardians Society on Park Row. Alas! They had no traces of any descendants of Rochefontaine here or in France. His daughter had had a son who died without heirs. In France, likewise, the family had died out. And I may as well say here that if any one reading this should know of anybody of the line of Rochefontaine, he would greatly oblige the said society by his information.

Well, I had to abandon my search, but I could not lose my interest in the *sieur* himself. Indeed, even as the president was telling me of some earth and water from the village of Ay which the mayor thereof was soon to send here to be mingled with Manhattan earth and Hudson water at the grave, I was thinking of how lonesome Rochefontaine really was, and how wistful his spirit would be to-morrow when—as I now learned—deputations from a French church and from this society were to place a wreath on the *tombeau* and make the *sieur* an address. And I resolved that, since it was a holiday, I, too, would go.

THE next morning came brilliant and fine. "A great day for a ride!" I thought, wondering if I could lure Doc with me—he needed a day off, busy fellow that he was. The countryside—say up in Westchester, and belated spring——

Ah! But that address in St. Paul's yard.

But Westchester County, and, besides, if we went there, I could drop in at the kennels, where there was a new litter of mastiffs—I remembered that lost little mongrel on the grave.

Had his master found him? Suppose he were still unclaimed. I saw again his large, liquid eyes. I saw him sitting there, so lonely, in that lonely spot.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

The combined call of the descendantless man and the masterless dog conquered. I went to St. Paul's yard.

I was too late for the rector's address in the chapel, so, having convinced myself that the lost dog was nowhere about, I waited outside and soon the little procession came down the path, the two clergymen leading, and the silk emblems floating. Larger and better flags were set by the tomb, and the little bouquet which I myself had slipped there showed bravely. The verger hung the laurel wreath, bright with tricolor ribbon, over the urn; then the French rector delivered a spirited address, at the last invoking the presence of the *sieur* himself—an odd scene, in that hot sunlight, and the buildings lacking their puffs of steam, the streets their traffic din, save for a few cries from a cherry wagon, a newspaper stand, a chocolate vendor, and, of course, the elevated railway behind the parish-house making its mid-aerial music, almost lyrical in its quality of ponderous yet swift impact.

Ten minutes saw the address ended, and the little crowd departed. But I stayed. Somehow I could not be reconciled to see this grave so lonely, for the departure of the deputation had given a peculiar isolation to the place.

At last I started to leave, but I found myself coming back down the side path instead of seeking the exit. "Just one more turn," I said, and so I came back to the grave. There, on it, sat the dog!

This time I confronted him with some determination.

"Dog, I have a right to be curious, really. Besides, if you confide in me, I shall not betray your confidence. I am devotedly attached to dogs."

His expression became so intense, he looked at me with such directness and significance that my speech faltered. Next moment, as if cleft from within, my brain opened and the thought leaped from it: "That dog *belongs* at that grave!"

And as if the thought had been a visible fulmination which he had seen, the animal pricked his ears and then moved his position so that he sat nearer to the tomb.

I was thinking, "But of course the kindly Rochefontaine would have loved dogs, would have owned them—did own—who knows?—the ancestor of this very dog,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

the terrier, bull, bird-dog or whatever breed to which he belonged."

Here was a descendant—the descendant of the Sieur de Rochefontaine's dog!

Who could say? Some cell of loyalty and devotion, transmitted through all the breeds that had combined to produce this waif, and maybe with the more vitality because of the great variety of intermixture—and coming out at last in this stray, to bring him here at this the loneliest hour of his progenitor's master and friend.

Remember that I had just been so drawn up into the atmosphere of the past that I could believe in the occult, I could really attribute my notion to a message from the just-invoked beyond.

However, the present was about to make itself felt with disillusioning realism. The sexton was approaching from the chapel porch.

"Well, sir, yes; I fed him. I got him a couple o' roast-beef sandwiches, but at five o'clock I had to lock him out. Guess he's going to try it again to-day. But it can't go on, sir. You see, dogs ain't allowed——"

"You mean," I exclaimed, "you'd send for the S. P. C. A.?"

"Well, sir"—the sexton lowered his voice—"got to—that is, sir, unless *you* want to take him?"

"*I* take him?"

"I know," almost whispered the good sexton; "I know apartments is no place for dogs, even for breed-dogs—though, indeed, he's got breed enough, ain't he? Pore little feller! Sort of what you might call a genuwine tooty-frooty dog—hey?" And he guffawed discretely, an eye on the dog to make sure his quip had not penetrated that supercanine consciousness. "A nice little feller, though—and see here, sir; if you happened to have a bit of back yard, maybe——"

I nodded, for I have a very nice little rectangle behind my house—but I had been planning on a mastiff, not a "tooty-frooty," to occupy it. I dragged out a fiver.

"Sexton, no one will come here to-day; the officials have left. Let him hang round again, and if at five he hasn't been found, lock him out—and if he comes back to-morrow I'll take him myself to the S. P. C. A. Come; one more day—a dog's day. What say?"

As I finished that speech, the dog, who had been watching the street, jerked his face round, and I had a vivid sensation of having been rapidly thanked by a grateful but very preoccupied beneficiary.

"If I don't get away from here, I'll be fit for a sanatorium," I thought, and, without delaying further, I bolted.

Next morning I had to keep my word with the sexton. Dog had returned. But now, unless I took charge of him the sexton would have to 'phone for the "society."

He helped me put Dog into the car—very much against Dog's will, which the animal asserted with dignity but also with a display of teeth and with a rigid back and legs turned to steel, so that some of the turf was scratched away in the conflict. I left the sexton a remuneration for his trouble and sympathy.

Now it was I who faced a conflict.

"Go up Broadway," I told Thomas, "as far as Eighth Street," for this command saved me from committing our course irrevocably to the east side of town, where lay the S. P. C. A. At Eighth Street my choice would have been made.

As for the dog, he sought to influence me neither the one way nor the other. He lay beside me, quiet enough now, watching mutely the noisy world whirl past; but that quietness unnerved me—it was so game, so nobly detached. I had shown, by taking him from the churchyard, that I had made myself the master of his fate. "Well, what next?" was his attitude. I reached out and touched him. He did not shrink; he did not move at all; he just gave me a clear glance of restrained inquiry.

Eighth Street—we cross it.

Only three more blocks, and my little home lies a bit of a way to the west. Was it to be that, or on up to Twenty-fourth Street and over to the East River?

Ninth Street. Tenth Street.

The dog looked at me. "It's on the knees of the gods," I read in those clear brown eyes.

And to the dogs we humans are—gods.

"Thomas, home!" I cried.

DOG accepted my hospitality, and beyond that there was nothing to say for quite two weeks—two weeks of dignified toleration, without a trace of gratitude or even obligatedness. Wielder of his destiny I might be, but he had not endorsed the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Mine," he replied firmly, and at the same time flushing faintly, "is E-teen Maree Betchet, Sewer dee Rotchafane."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

destiny. Of his behavior, however, he rendered a superb account. Not a habit of his but you would have considered it that of the best-bred dog—and I am a connoisseur of canine manners. I wished, indeed, that he had been less—well, *comme il faut*. His emotional restraint excelled any that I have ever encountered in a dog. I've always been pals with my dogs—we've gone in for jamborees and raggings and a lot of rough stuff generally, but I'd as soon have thought of romping with a prime minister as with Dog.

He was so persistently detached and lonely. In a mongrel one looks for crude reactions, either hostile or affectionate. I pondered this aloofness, this separate existence, this keeping of his thoughts to himself. I soon discovered that some of these thoughts were of a very inconvenient nature. The rascal was plotting his escape. No stupid idea of leaping past me as I went out—no; a studious attention to the general lay of the land, with an eye to some perfect opportunity. Guessing this, I gave Thomas injunctions about keeping him in the yard unless he howled. He never howled; he never did anything so *gauche*.

"I almost believe he *is* the descendant of Rochefontaine's dog," I said to Doc; "this is an Old-World stateliness, a *savoir-faire*— And yet Rochefontaine was no snob; he fought for a republic."

"That's it! He fought—a good exercise," said Doc. "There are others who would do well to take it up, to stir about a bit and take a few good whacks at something or other." He was himself whacking at me—my condition still displeased him; he wanted me to go in for something like golf or polo—or even roller-skating, he said, if I wouldn't try anything else. As to this dog, he saw nothing in the creature but a mutt, and all the fine qualities to which I gave such fine titles he considered a mere mutt stupidity. I was annoyed, and said so.

Dog's unhappiness made me desperate, and I couldn't bear, when I left for work, to see him sitting there, his extraordinary body so incongruously dignified, the short front bow legs supporting the too broad chest, the rounded little head on slender neck, the narrowing muzzle and the great brown eyes which so seldom looked into mine, but rather through or past me.

Then things brightened a bit. A friend of mine, Jim Polk, had been abroad, and I didn't know he had returned until he 'phoned me. In my surprise on recognizing his voice, I cried, "Jim!" and straightway a great commotion took place. Dog gave a yelp and leaped up in trembling excitement and ran to me—a transformed and a by no means dignified dog.

That was how I discovered his name. But the excitement soon lapsed. Perhaps in exclaiming the word my voice had taken some tone that had resembled the tone of his master. Never afterward could I so pronounce it as to rouse him to any unusual response. Yet he was not ill pleased to have his own name again. But though our relationship became less strained, it was certainly no nearer to intimacy, and finally I decided to advertise him, and I said that if there were no answer I would send for the S. P. C. A. The ad was never answered, but Jim remained with me.

It happened through his falling ill. Poor chap, he ate—or gallantly forced himself to eat—something with which I sought to tempt his waning appetite. The food must have been tainted. I sent for the vet, but I myself nursed him. Why this struggle to save a life I had condemned to the lethal chamber? Ah, but already the sentence was revoked. I could never send him to his death. I did not even want him to die by the natural—or unnatural—cause of ptomaine.

"Jim, old boy," I said to him, "come; give me one more chance. Maybe you could grow to like me. I like you so much. And you're young yet—you ought to have a fine, long, happy life ahead of you. Get well, and let's start over. What say?"

Well, no matter from what cause, he recovered, and though he had not requested the boon of life, he was from then on more favorable toward me, whether from a feeling that my efforts merited the courteous acknowledgment or—well, away with mock modesty. I *think* it was from a real, however slight, inclination for me.

I was considerably set up when, on starting for work one morning, he just touched my hand with his tongue, at the same time faintly wagging his tail.

THAT noon the sexton came to me. Lately he had shunned me, for he was fed up on the topic of Jim, yet now he

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

voluntarily mentioned the dog. He had seen the former sexton.

"Mr. Sass, you know, and I ast him about your dog, and he says a young hunchback used to set down in that corner and read, and there was a dog with him like your dog, and about noontime a kid always came to him from school and they et lunch there, and then the kid went off to sell papers and the hunchback and the dog went over toward Greenwich Street—there's houses there, you know; people live over there."

I knew they did. I've seen those ancient dormered little brick houses, which sometimes disappear overnight, as it were, to make room for some office sky-scraper.

"But, sexton, why don't they come here now? What stopped them, and why did the dog come here alone, and why didn't the boy look for him here?"

But these matters were as little known to the sexton as to me. Nor could his predecessor, whom I interviewed, give me any information.

"Ah, *monsieur*," I said to the spirit of Rochefontaine, "if you could but tell me who he was, that young hunchback, who liked to sit here and read! What did he read? The inscription here? But in French—I wonder. A scholar would hardly live in Greenwich Street. A young hunchback and a kid. And the dog, Jim. A lonely sound, somehow, about that young couple. Ah, *monsieur*, there are so many people who are lonely—is it not so?"

That night I took Jim on a leash through the square. He seemed used to the leash, and the walk did him good. Several people stared at us, but I fiercely outstared them. Then I encountered Doc, to whom I told what I had heard of Jim's masters.

"Yes, yes, Martin; that's all very well in its way," he said, "but I don't like the way. It's too moony and ingrowing. You took the dog because he was lonely. You pitied him, and that's another way of pitying yourself, because you've let yourself get lonely. You must get *interests*. People—living people, not dead ones. This absorption in a dead foreigner and a lost dog—no, no; it's too sentimental. And you aren't picking up as I wanted. From now on, you walk to work."

"Walk—two miles and a half——"

"Shut up, or I'll make you walk back, too!"

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

I have since tried to make Doc take an extra fee for that advice which I so resented at the time.

Jim followed me down-town—sneaked out one morning, but not for the purpose of running away. No; not to run away from me. To catch up with me, to accompany me. Completely gratified, I had no thought of taking him home, but let him go with me all the way.

As my office is well above the neighborhood that was presumably his, he seemed to find nothing to disturb him in the way of reminders, and he behaved perfectly, except that he was scared of the elevator. He made quite a stir among the office force, but no one dared laugh at him. In a short time his dignity and poise made them forget his oddity of form. The long walk had tired him, and I prepared him a bed of alpaca coats which he quietly appropriated, and he was soon in a deep sleep.

For the first time I had the feeling, however tentative, that he was my dog.

At about ten-thirty I happened to pass him, and he suddenly sprang upright with a loud yelp. Running to the window, he tried to reach the high sill.

"Dreaming," I reflected. "These down-town noises are familiar; they've set him dreaming of the past." I shut the windows at the bottom—a precaution that insulted Jim's intelligence, for he wasn't the dog to leap hysterically from a third story to the street. No; he chose the ordinary method of escape.

When, half an hour later, he had vanished, I soon found that some one had seen him going down the stairs. As to destination, he could have had but one, and I pursued him thither in a taxi. I remember that the driver looked disappointed when I alighted. He had expected to see a wedding going on—why else would a business man rush suddenly to St. Paul's yard at eleven in the morning?

Ah, better than a wedding—it was a reunion!

There was Jim, and Jim had found his master. Not the hunchback—the kid.

EVIDENTLY the boy had but just come, for the pair were still in the raptures of discovery. But was this Jim—this yelping, tongue-flapping animal, this frantic jumping-jack, who had lost his tail through

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

the simple process of its becoming invisible from the rapidity of its gyrations. Then it occurred to me that the boy was even worthier of attention than the dog. A hollow-cheeked kid, haggard and dirty, his shoes white with dust, and frayed as if they had traveled a long way.

"Jim!" I addressed the canine in a tone meant to blend the familiarity of friendship with the disclaimance of ownership. Jim did not so much as look at me, but the boy leaped to his feet, making a backward gesture, terrified yet defiant. I saw a freckled face and deep-set eyes that glared at me, and a shaky voice muttered sullenly,

"I won't go back!"

"Well, young fellow, that's all right," I said frankly. "I'm sure you don't have to go or come or do anything you don't want to do. So far as I'm concerned, it's no business of mine. But Jim's been living with me since I found him here one day, and I'm fond of him. So, of course, I'm glad he and you have found each other again, and if you're half as bully as he, I'm proud to meet you."

"You found him here?" the boy asked dubiously.

"Yes. About a month ago. He followed me this morning from—well, over two miles up-town, and then he left the office when I wasn't looking. Something must have told him you were here. Dogs have a lot of knowledge that way."

"If you been keeping him so long, why don't he act likes he knows you?"

"Why, you don't expect him to notice me just when he's found you again?" I smiled. "And, anyhow, he never took much of a shine to me, though I like him a lot and shall miss him. He was hanging round here, and the sexton was about to send for the S. P. C. A., but that seemed pretty tough—not the right thing to do by a superior dog like Jim."

AS I said this, incredulity and delight came into the boy's face, and an intense gratitude of the inarticulate boy sort, causing him complete speechlessness, from which state I sought to free him. I said again how glad I was.

"And as for his giving me the go-by, now when he's got you back, why, I don't blame him."

"No, sir; don't blame him. It's because he's excited; he don't mean to be ungrateful."

"Oh, you needn't apologize for him; he's a fine dog." I gave Jim the character he merited, and meantime I was thinking hard. Plainly, the boy had run away and was afraid of being caught. Questioning would scare him until I could prove myself his ally. I must be very cautious. So I said,

"Now, don't you think we ought to celebrate by going over to that restaurant and having a feed?"

He glanced at the bench here and at the tomb, and I realized that he was thinking of the hunchback, and it would never do to take him to the restaurant across the way. I mentioned, as if on second thoughts, another one, on Nassau Street.

"The sexton told me how you used to come here and eat lunch with your—with another fellow," I added.

"This sexton's a new one; he couldn't have told you anything about me," the boy said suspiciously.

I carefully cleared up the matter of the former sexton, Mr. Sass, and enlarged on the kind-heartedness of the new one, who had refrained from his specific duty for two whole days in order to give Jim his chance. At that the boy pulled the dog closer to him, and I thought Jim would have licked the very freckles off his master's face. The boy was studying me, wondering if he might indeed confide in me, and all at once, for what reason I know not, Jim stretched toward me—I had seated myself by them on the bench—and he touched my hand with that surcharged tongue of his—the one O. K. his master would not dream of doubting!

Then the kid told me.

"It was my brother who used to sit here. He used to sit here and read, and Jim stayed with him, and the old sexton used to let 'em, because Nate—my brother—was a hunchback. Did he tell you Nate was a hunchback?"

"Yes. But why did Nate stop coming?" I asked carefully.

The boy looked down, waited a moment; then, raising his clear eyes to mine:

"Why, he was hit by a truck under the 'el,' and he never got over it. He died."

Silence on both our sides.

"And then," the boy went on, "the folks we lived with over in Greenwich Street

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

they moved away, because the houses there was going to be torn down, and they took me and Jim here with 'em up to Hudson Street. But I wouldn't stay with 'em—they ain't no relations of mine; they just took me and Nate to raise—we was orphans."

Again the clear gaze on mine, this time in proud challenge. But the tone in which he had mentioned "the folks we lived with" warned me against sentimental platitudes about kind people adopting homeless boys, and I craftily preserved a silent detachment.

"It was all right," he continued, "when the old lady was alive."

The tone of the words "old lady" gave me my cue.

"Ah—she?" I queried genially.

"Yeah; she was good to us. She thought a lot of Nate. But she got pneumonia, and that croaked her. After that, it was different. Then Nate—then that what I told you—that happened. And after that, why, I lit out with my dog. I ran away."

"I see. But how did you lose Jim?"

"Oh, they got us, and they took us back. That is, they put me in the—out in the country."

"I understand," I said, letting him know I knew the hateful word "reformatory." "But you got away from that and came back to town?"

"Yeah. Yesterday I lit out. I just got in here—just now."

Then he explained Jim's presence here that day a month ago. The "folks" had kept the animal, but Jim had escaped, and, coming back to the old neighborhood, he must have been confused by the disappearance of the house. But he had known the churchyard equally well, and here he had taken up his vigil, waiting to be found by his boy.

"Did you know he had run away?" I asked.

"Yeah. Those folks have a boy—a big fellow, a mean guy. He hates me, and he wrote it to me—he wrote me Jim had beat it because he knew it would make me feel bad. Last week he wrote it, and as soon as I got a chance I—I beat it for New York."

"But," I suggested, "those folks will have told the authorities that you went away. Is this a safe place for you?"

"No; but—" He gazed at the tomb, and again I understood. "I ain't going to stay long enough to get caught," he added in a changed tone, and, rising, "I got plans."

As he said that, he reeled. He had turned pale under his tan and freckles.

"I really think," I said, "we'd better go and have something to eat. I'm hungry, too. If you've got plans, you need strength, you know, to carry them out. And, by the way, now that we know all about each other, we might as well know each other's names. Mine is Alfred Martin," I tendered expectantly.

God knows I did not expect what came.

"Mine," he replied firmly, and at the same time flushing faintly, "is É-teen Maree Betchet, Sewer dee Rotchafane."

IT'S when you survive a shock like that that you know you'll never die of heart-disease.

"Do you mean that you are a descendant of this gentleman here?"

My intensity must have startled him. He seemed unnerved; the faint flush deepened. He looked guilty.

"Not actually," he faltered, fidgeting.

But I was roused to the highest pitch of curiosity, and in sheer panic of losing my quarry through bungling, I forced myself to be calm.

"It's *his* name, there, and I very much want to find out if he had any descendants. If that's your name——"

"Well, it ain't—not actually."

"You mean some one called you that in fun?"

"It wasn't in fun." He was now dark crimson. "It was Nate's idea. He sat here reading every day, and one day some swell-educated guys came along, and they was trying, just like you are, to figure out if this guy here had any dissend—dissendunce, and one of em said, 'No; there wasn't none,' and when they'd all gone, Nate says, 'Say, Fred'—that's me, my actual name—he says: 'Say, Fred, let's give this old guy that's buried here some regular dissendunce. He's lonesome, and it's a shame, anyhow, him fighting for this country and dying here and no family to remember him or bring flowers. Let's give him a family.' Because," Fred concluded, and now meeting my eyes, though with an effort, "you see, being orphans, we ain't got no *real* last name."

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

It was now I who suffered from the effects of sudden weakness.

I took us off to a place where a cup of black coffee would perform for me the reviving office which a stack of wheats, ham and eggs, fried potatoes and other sundries would perform for Fred. During the meal Jim, who occupied a chair between us, engaged his excited energies in various ways, and also—to my chagrin, for surely I had plied him with every delicacy during his sojourn with me—he now devoured all sorts of scraps and titbits from his master's fork or spoon.

"Fred, how did you first become Jim's owner?" I asked, when, having finished a slab of lemon-méringue pie, Fred was toying with ice-cream, strawberry and chocolate mixed.

"Oh, that?" he mused, his hand on his stomach gratefully. "Why, one day Nate and me we was going past the Washington Market, and we seen him in front of one of them cheese-and-butter places. He was a little young pup and he was lost, and we took him home."

"Ah!" I said, but I was saying to myself, in facetious triumph, "Now I know that dog's breed—he's a cheese-hound." And I laughed uproariously. And for some reason, though he was ignorant of the cause of my mirth and would have been insulted had he guessed, Fred caught my infection of glee and his eyes narrowed and glinted and his mouth opened in a grin, and then he leaned his head back and ha-ha'd at the top of his shrill boy-voice. Whereat Jim leaped up, barking in wild joy and slapping the air with his tongue and drumming up a breeze that rivaled that from the electric fan.

Gradually we recovered. Looking at the boy, I thought how he was trying to escape the forces of oppression, even as the young country had tried, for whom Fred's adopted ancestor had fought in the War of Independence.

"Fred," I exclaimed, "do you know, I think that was one of the best and finest ideas I ever heard of—that idea of Nate's, to give old Rochefontaine a family! I'm willing to bet anything you like that it pleased him more than all the wreaths and flags and speeches in the whole world." Fred scratched his head, looking pleased and awkward. "As to your having to hide," I went on, "if you'll come to live with me, I can fix things so that no one will ever bother you about that place in the country or any other place. And I am alone, and I have a big car—you could soon learn to drive it—and I'm a baseball and movie fan. And you wouldn't have to go to school till September, though you'd want to go then, anyhow—you, the descendant of Étienne Marie Bechet, Sieur de Rochefontaine." I said the name rapidly, so as not to rub in the French accent.

The boy stared at me.

"You mean to come and *live* with you?"

"For so long as you like. Jim did, and he doesn't seem to be any the worse for it; does he?" Fred sat with open mouth, speechless. "In fact, Jim might advise you to try it—it 's the same thing you offered him. Maybe that little lost pup in front of the cheese shop said, when you and Nate wanted to take him home: 'I don't know these fellows; but they don't look so bad, and I'm young, and if I don't like it I can go away. I'm game to try anything once.' "

Fred's face grew crimson; his clear gaze fell. But I knew why. I understood that there was no paucity of emotion behind what to others might have seemed an inadequate comment when, staring at the tablecloth and poking it with a soiled forefinger, he gave a brief whistle and uttered the one word:

"Gee!"

Leaving the restaurant, we bought a handsome bouquet and turned back toward the churchyard.

"How do you say it?" Fred asked on the way, "Ét—Ét-Étyenn—that, and the rest of it?"

"Oh, your name?" I repeated it, and he said it after me, getting it surprisingly well. "But you needn't use all of it all the time. Fred Rochefontaine is good enough for every day."

WHEN we had placed the flowers on the tomb, Jim, who had watched us from the bench, set up a strange, thin, ecstatic howl, and for all I know he may have been in occult communication with the spirit of Rochefontaine, whose descendant was now established properly on the journey of life.

I have every reason to believe—indeed, I already have proof—that the descendant of this fine gentleman is going to be worthy of the great name he bears.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

A Square Guy

Tinker's Ridge Never Realty Began to Live until Professor Scruggs Arrived with His Oil-Boom

By Harley P. Lathrop

"A PHILOSOPHER with the soul of a poet," defended Doc Peet, who was one of the few educated men in Tinker's Ridge.

"Always good for a stake when you go broke," one fly-by-night told another.

"An offspring of the devil and a thorn in the side of the righteous," thundered the Reverend Josiah Delmas from his improvised pulpit of packing-boxes.

"The best lookout in the country and chain lightning on the draw," boasted Big Bill, who ran the Golden Dollar and was the poet-philosopher's friend and employer.

This anent Johnny Hutchinson—square guy.

As the occasion offered, Johnny discussed the merits of long-dead sages with Doc Peet.

When needful, he depleted his bank-roll to help out some unlucky wooer of Dame Fortune's smile. On Sunday afternoon when, in the abandoned dance-hall which served him as a tabernacle, the Reverend Josiah roared denunciations against the wickedness of Tinker's Ridge, Johnny was always among those present. It was his flutelike tenor which really led the singing, and the yellow-backed bill that invariably adorned the collection-plate came from none other than Johnny's pocket.

Johnny labored from eight in the evening until—well, generally until sunup. During the greater part of this period he might be found perched high in the Golden Dollar's lookout chair. At times, in order to stretch his long legs, he would move indolently round among the tables. And always his brown eyes appeared dreamily musing, sleepily indifferent. Some few—mostly chance visitors—had accepted these signs at their face value. But these foolhardy parties never made the same mistake twice.

That "Two-Spot" Clancy and old "Three-Finger" Joe, whose surname was either buried in antiquity or abandoned when he left the effete East, felt perfectly at ease while working under Johnny's surveillance was a commendation not to be lightly gaged.

"It is a pleasure to run a game under his supervision," they assured each other. No need for them to carry, much less resort to the use of that article of warfare named after the respected New Englander—Mr. Colt, to be exact.

Another tribute to Johnny's ability as a lookout was the reputation the Golden Dollar bore as a safe place in which to flirt with the goddess of Chance. There the danger of having your pleasure interrupted by an across-the-table gun-battle was practically nil. It was Johnny's duty to keep all thoughtless warriors pacified, and he did it in a manner that greatly enhanced his renown as a peace-maker.

During his periods of leisure he might be found tipped back in a chair on the gallery of the Lone Star Hotel, absorbing wisdom and soothing his sense of rhythm with the lays of some favorite bard. If he was not there, a stroll to the edge of town would reveal him performing unbelievable stunts with a six-shooter and a tin can.

You have to keep in constant practise if you hold down a job like Johnny's and are desirous of prolonging life. Johnny

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

was only twenty-three, and not at all weary of this existence.

AND then—Mr. Amos Crowder and the Reverend Josiah Delmas arrived at Tinker's Ridge. Mr. Amos's advent antedated the other's by a few days. His definite but unvoiced intention in coming was to fatten his somewhat lean purse at the expense of the Golden Dollar. The Reverend Josiah came fired by the laudable if rather quixotic ambition of combating the devil in his own habitat.

The Reverend Josiah brought with him into Tinker's Ridge his only two possessions. One was a daughter, whose looks were assuredly not a direct heritage from the paternal side of the family. The other was a sublime, unwavering faith that the Lord will provide for those who wrestle valiantly with iniquity.

Mr. Amos Crowder likewise came lugging two cherished possessions. One was a gun which heretofore had proved a trifle faster and immeasurably more deadly than any adversary's. The other was an almost fanatical belief that, given the proper time and circumstances, the hand is quicker than the eye.

Amos's implicit conviction regarding the rapidity of the hand over the eye foisted two people into trouble, and that right shortly. First, it got the sanguine Amos into difficulties with Johnny Hutchinson, and then catapulted Johnny spang into the Reverend Josiah's bad graces.

It was the night of the reverend's arrival that Amos unfortunately selected as the proper time to put his deep-seated convictions to the test. Sauntering into the Golden Dollar, he subjected the different games of chance to what he considered an exhaustive examination. "Dead easy," he concluded smugly.

His attempted *coup* was pulled at Three-Finger Joe's table. Old Three-Finger glanced meaningly at Johnny, and his left eyelid twitched almost imperceptibly. Johnny nodded, then spoke—not in wrath or anger, but in the plaintive tone of one whom such futile proceedings bored almost to extinction.

"I wouldn't try that stuff round here," he remonstrated mildly, as if correcting a precocious child. "We run all our games on the level."

There was only one logical answer in Tinker's Ridge to such an insinuation. Amos reached for his gun. He attained the desired objective, and that was about all. There came a spurt of flame, which showed blue in the garish light, and a silence-shattering report. Almost simultaneously Johnny Hutchinson uncurled his long legs from about the lookout's chair and landed lightly on the floor.

"You never should have attempted it," he reproachfully chided, kicking Amos's gun out from under the table and rescuing it with a graceful swoop. "A stunt as downright crude as that would have got you killed off in a lot of places."

Amos's sole reply to this matter-of-fact remonstrance was a string of muttered curses. Johnny thoughtfully allowed his eyelids to droop, thus veiling his obvious annoyance. Such talk to him always implied the lack of a vocabulary. This, to Johnny, was one of the lesser crimes.

Jabbing the barrel of his gun into the gambler's ribs, Johnny guided the discomfited individual through a grinning lane of spectators toward the exit. Considerately pushing open the swinging doors, he ushered him into the street. It was at this particular juncture that Johnny's name was scriven on the roll of the devil's following, and he became automatically listed as a fitting victim to be impaled upon the sword of righteousness.

Only that afternoon had the Reverend Josiah Delmas arrived at Tinker's Ridge in his unswerving pursuit of sin. Fortified with an ample supper and surcharged with a vast determination, he was hot on the war-path, seeking traces of the cloven hoof. But until this immediate instant the reverend had drawn an absolute blank. Strange to say, the devil was not poking his horned head round each and every corner, inviting a lusty smack from one of the anointed. And, too, the Reverend Josiah was suffering under the slight handicap imposed by his daughter's presence. He felt that under the circumstances he was barred from investigating these places where the stacatto clatter of chips and the musical clink of glasses gave notice that the devil was having his innings. His daughter's presence precluded that. But here, bursting out from behind the swinging doors—right under his nose, as it were—

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

came an unregenerate pair who fairly smelled to heaven for his attention.

No matter how problematical were his qualifications as a preacher, the Reverend Josiah's being contained not an atom of fear.

"Ah!" he gloated sanctimoniously. "Ah!"

Then he boiled over. Undamming all his pent-up powers of exhortation, he swept the two with a veritable torrent of Scripture. For a moment, overwhelmed by the verbal flood to which they were subjected, both stood rooted in their tracks. Johnny it was who first recovered his equanimity. He stretched forth a deprecating hand.

"Just a moment, Dominie," he begged sweetly. Then he turned to the wounded gambler. "Hotfoot it down the street to Doc Peet's office. I see his lights still burning. Get him to fix up your wrist and tell him to send his bill to the Golden Dollar. Here's your gun." Breaking the weapon open, he extracted the shells and returned it to the gambler. "Come and see us again when you get well," he genially invited. "We always aim to please."

Then he turned to the dumfounded Josiah.

"You can turn it on now, Preacher," he drawled, with a disarming smile. "I guess I can stand it for a while, anyway."

Restless, champing on the bit at the enforced delay, the reverend needed no second invitation. The restrained torrent now assumed the proportions of a healthy cloudburst.

TRUE to his word, Johnny stayed. At first he was actuated by a sense of politeness. Quickly this changed to one of sheer and unmitigated curiosity. Gradually, as the exhorter warmed up to his work, his peculiar phraseology, combined with the informality of his utterance, began to tickle Johnny's sense of humor. His mouth, in spite of strenuous attempts at control, began to twitch with the startings of a grin. Seeking something—anything—to distract his attention, he let his eyes stray from the preacher's face. They came to rest on a girl's face.

Johnny's heart gave a little suffocating leap. A pace or two from the narrow board sidewalk, just outside the slanting ray of light which streamed from above the swinging doors, she stood in the darkness.

"A lily floating in the Stygian Pool," thought the poetic Johnny, and looked again. There might have been an answering twinkle in her eyes. Who knows? Johnny abandoned any idea of trying to control his facial muscles and smiled—smiled as only Johnny Hutchinson could. And—wonder of wonders—she smiled back.

It may be that at some previous stage of his career the Reverend Josiah had himself been young and just a trifle lonesome and knew the signs. Or again his sixth sense, which was always on the alert to combat any wiles of the devil, may have warned him that his daughter was tampering with the ungodly.

Breaking off in the midst of a flowery dissertation, he turned and thundered,

"Joyce!"

The nonplused Johnny clutched at this intermission like a drowning man at a life-line. When the Reverend Josiah swung back to take up the thread of his interrupted discourse, his audience of one had vanished. A slight motion of the swinging doors testified as to the manner of its disappearance.

The balance of the evening, Johnny was serenely oblivious to the clink of glasses and the rattle of chips. These familiar sounds were drowned by the strains of the celestial music which rang persistently in his ears. His eyes, roving the tables, seemed to be noting as usual all the customary routine. And so they were—but only mechanically. His inner eye was busy visioning entrancing pictures—pictures that had a deal to do with an oval face swimming in a sea of darkness. Doc Peet had spoken aright when he declared that Johnny Hutchinson had the soul of a poet.

The visions had grown no dimmer, nor had the symphonies diminished noticeably by the following afternoon. Johnny was sitting on the gallery of the Lone Star Hotel when she passed. She glanced up at him shyly.

"Why, how do you do? I know you are not as black as father painted you," her eyes averred.

"I have been watching for you all day. You are the most beautiful girl I ever saw," declared the graceful sweep of Johnny's broad hat.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

And then, the very next afternoon, she chanced to meet him again. This time Johnny, near the outskirts of town, was methodically depopulating the prairie of tin cans.

"What are you doing?" Miss Joyce's eyes demanded. "Oh, isn't it fun!" they continued.

Johnny grew reckless.

"Try it," he said aloud.

"Oh, oh! I hit it; didn't I?" Johnny lied unblushingly and dug for more shells. So it was in no way strange that the Reverend Josiah quickly found a place to preach and that his audiences far exceeded his most sanguine expectations.

For, luckily, Big Bill owned the abandoned dance-hall which the reverend had pitched on for his tabernacle. Big Bill himself acknowledged that his lookout had a highly persuasive manner. Johnny, who had spent considerable time as a cow-puncher, found that rounding up recalcitrant sinners every Sunday afternoon was but little different from prodding stray cows back into the herd. Of course, one had to be considerably more cautious. There was no use laying yourself or your actions open to unnecessary suspicions—and Johnny never would smell like a violet to the Reverend Josiah.

To the unholy glee of the camp, which affected to view the entire affair as a high jest, a parsonage was built for the Reverend Josiah. Johnny would have most indignantly denied that any of the subscriptions were solicited by force. "Of course, a little moral persuasion; that was different." Best of all, there was no one who dreamed that the ample plot of ground on which the parsonage was erected had been won from Sandy Walsh in one of Johnny's infrequent poker games. The deed did not show it, and Sandy was not there to tell. Sandy was safe in Klondike or some other far-away place, thanks to a substantial loan from Johnny.

AND then—a stranger drifted into Tinker's Ridge. Of course strangers were no rarity in that prairie cow-town, but this one was neither wide-hatted nor high-booted. He bore the earmarks of a different range. Quiet and unobtrusive in manner, huge horn spectacles lent him a pedantic air. His time was spent in what were apparently foot-loose wanderings about the country.

"Shucks! He's nothing but one of them bug-hunters. I seen plenty of them in my time," boasted "No-Water" Ike when by chance some one remarked on the peculiarities of the visitor. So that settled that.

A month after his arrival, he suddenly ceased his wandering and, hiring a gentle horse, visited some of the larger landholders. When he returned, the philosophic calm of his face was replaced with a flush of victory. Tightly buttoned inside his coat was a bulky sheath of papers.

Just what motive urged Professor Horace Scruggs to visit the Golden Dollar during his last night in town will always remain a secret of his own. Possibly an irresistible craving for company and the excitement to be found behind the swinging doors lured him thither. Or, again, he may have entered with malice aforethought, intent on proving the infallibility of mathematics. Sufficient to say, he ventured inside, and, once there, gravitated toward the gaming-tables.

Now, the laws of chance are whimsical and vagrant; the laws of system are fallible and prone to be upset, but the laws which govern the house percentage are as immutable as death itself. They are like the constant drip of water which wears away a stone. Given a sufficient space of time and a determined player, and they will slowly but insidiously eat up the fattest of bank-rolls.

Big Bill knew this. If it had not been so, he long ago would have been relegated to the limbo of bankrupt gambling-house proprietors. Three-Finger Joe knew it also. It was this incontrovertible fact which kept him a job. Likewise was Johnny Hutchinson aware of this truth. But Professor Horace Scruggs' view of life was based on exact mathematical formulas. His experience and training had taught him there was nothing existent but what could be reduced to an absolute science by the use of figures. This proved that he was in abysmal ignorance of the five and some odd-hundredth per cent. which favors the house.

When Big Bill saw the pedagogic-looking gentleman hovering over Three-Finger's faro layout, jotting down cryptic figures in a small note-book, he smiled

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

wisely. If Three-Finger noticed him at all, it was with a blasé air of weariness. Three-Finger had seen many theorists fall by the wayside in his time.

JOHNNY, whose duty it was to see everything, observed him with a slight tincture of scorn. For Johnny also knew the utter futility of bucking house percentage with a system. A quick, haphazard plunge here and there, wooing Lady Luck when she was in a sunshiny mood—that was gambling. This other was sheer slaughter of the innocents.

As if bent on disproving the accepted theory that figures do not lie, the house percentage, in conjunction with several runs of ill luck, gnawed away at the theorist's hoard. It is doubtful if the professor was aware of the speed at which his pile diminished, so engrossed was he in his mathematical calculations. Only when the last dollar disappeared was he shocked out of his trance. Then, as the extent of the disaster was borne in upon him, he retreated to the bar, brushing perplexedly at his eyes.

Something in the woebegone appearance of the professor prodded Johnny Hutchinson into unwilling action.

"You're about to make a damn fool of yourself again," he chided, under his breath, as he uncoiled his long legs and descended from the chair and sauntered up to the bewildered loser.

"Cleaned?" he inquired in a matter-of-fact manner, leaning idly against the bar.

"I—er—er—something seems to have gone amiss. Possibly a trifling mistake in figures." The professor anxiously consulted his note-book.

"Yeah; too much system and too little luck," Johnny commented caustically.

The professor, still immersed in his note-book, paid no heed to this enlightening bit of information.

"You need a little getaway money?" Johnny demanded, gruffly insistent.

Rousing a trifle from his abstraction, the professor searched his pockets.

"Ah—er—yes; I seem to have lost what I had with me. Just a temporary embarrassment," was the explanation.

Johnny smiled wearily. He had frequently met others of this sort—to his sorrow.

"How much you need to get home on?" Johnny produced his roll.

The professor shed a little more of his absent-mindedness.

"Ah—er—yes; you wish to cash a check? Kind of you."

Drawing forth a check-book, the professor hastily filled in a blank and signed it.

Johnny was slightly jarred as he noted the amount it called for.

"Whew!" he whistled. "Guess I'll have to frame this chromo." Game as well as square was Johnny Hutchinson. He casually counted off the required amount and carelessly thrust the check into his pocket.

As he started to turn away, the professor put out a detaining hand.

"Ah—er—what are your duties here?"

"Lookout," Johnny responded briefly.

"Is—is it remunerative?"

Johnny attempted to evade the detaining hand. He had obeyed his first impulse to his sorrow. Now the lookout's perch was beckoning. But politeness was an ingrained characteristic in Johnny.

"Oh, so-so," he returned.

"You look like a deserving young man. Would you care to be rich?"

Johnny eyed the professor with open distrust. It was plain that he was even more cracked than his appearance indicated. "Plumb nutty," Johnny argued. "There ought to be some sort of a game-law protecting people like this."

"Well, so long," he said in a tone of flat finality. But, to his intense surprise, the professor took a firmer grasp on his sleeve and steered him toward a vacant table. Motioning to a chair, he spread down on the table's top a small-scale contour map. In a plethora of technical phrases, dealing with salt-domes, fault-lines and other formative indications, the professor outlined the map's meaning.

Johnny listened to the lucid explanation in amazement. To him, oil had heretofore held only a nebulous and indistinct value. He knew it came from the ground and was good to burn—that was about all. But under the professor's tutelage untold possibilities began to open up.

"Of course," the professor concluded, "I may be wrong, but my varied experience as a geologist leads me to believe otherwise. Certainly the company I represent will spend considerable money before my

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

theories are disproved. It is not our policy to lease everything. To-day I procured some of the larger tracts, but there are still innumerable small holdings to be had. I would advise you to act with rapidity, though. The news that we intend drilling several test-wells will soon leak out. That will cause a great influx of the so-called 'lease-hounds.'"

"You have no objection to my sharing this knowledge with a friend?" Johnny asked, thinking quickly.

The professor unlimbered his absent smile.

"Not the slightest," he assured. "Oft-times two heads are better than one."

AND then—in less than three months the professor's prognostications proved correct. Almost overnight the transformation was effected. Tinker's Ridge became a roaring, boiling oil-town, a seething, turbulent bedlam of chimera-chasing men, gambling for nature's hidden wealth.

Big Bill sold out the Golden Dollar and threw his fortunes in with Johnny. Amos Crowder, as if to vindicate his contention that the hand is quicker than the eye, emerged from a crooked card game with a lease that proved of untold value. Even the Reverend Josiah Delmas, bitten by the lure of possible millions, relegated to some distant date his pursuit of the devil and entered the game.

The land upon which the parsonage stood proved to be almost in the center of the field. Obsessed by the idea of growing rich beyond all the dreams of avarice, the Reverend Josiah refused to lease his land on the customary royalty basis. Against all advice of well-meaning friends, he mortgaged the tract, and with the proceeds started to sink a well of his own.

As if to mock his efforts, Fate, in the guise of Death stepped in. But before he passed on—repenting of what he belatedly considered his fall from grace—the Reverend Josiah extracted from his daughter Joyce a promise that she would complete the well and dedicate half the income accruing therefrom to the spreading of the gospel.

So the "preacher's lease," as it was called, rested in the hands of a girl. And Johnny Hutchinson, respecting her unspoken desire, refrained from asking the question which lay nearest to his heart until the Reverend Josiah's dying wish should be fulfilled.

But some three months after the Reverend Josiah had shuffled off his mortal coil, Johnny Hutchinson low-geared his battered fliver through the congested traffic of the mushroom oil-town. He was a browned, sun-tanned Johnny now, his clothes muddy and oil-stained, but his was the same old chivalrous spirit.

Parking in front of the Faro Oil Company's office, he stamped wrathfully inside.

"Hell's to pay," he quoth, as he slammed the door shut.

Big Bill heaved his huge bulk round in his chair.

"Huh?" he grunted, blinking with disconcerting slowness.

As if a little regretful of his sudden flare-up, Johnny let his voice sink to the tone of silky smoothness which, in the old days, always presaged war to come.

"Somebody's monkeying with the preacher's lease," he drawled.

Big Bill's face expanded into a broad grin. If rumor were to be credited, Johnny had practically sunk Miss Joyce's well to its present depth with his bare hands.

"Now, listen, my fat Falstaffian friend," Johnny continued dryly, a trifle of color showing beneath the tan of his face; "really, this is no laughing-matter. It's a downright serious proposition."

The smile slowly faded from Big Bill's face, and he eyed his partner questioningly.

"Here's how the cards are stacked," Johnny explained, in answer to the inquiring look: "There is not a joint of six-inch pipe on the preacher's lease. The well's shut down and the crew' s quit."

"I don't see's that's any killing-matter, Bill grumbled. "Joyce can buy what pipe she needs and pick up a couple more crews in a week or ten days at the outside. I hope I never have any more worries than that."

If anything, Johnny's voice grew a bit more silky.

"See if you can dope this out, then," he challenged amiably. "In exactly five days the mortgage on the lease is due. Along with a few other of his asinine doings, the Reverend Josiah signed a proviso saying that unless the lease contained a producing well by the time the mortgage

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

came due, the mortgagee could use his own discretion as to whether he accept payment of the notes or take over the lease. Furthermore, Joyce has had pipe ordered for a month, but it has been side-tracked somewhere. When she goes out and tries to rustle some in the field, she finds that every available foot has been bought up within the last week. Of course, one guess is as good as another, but this looks like loaded dice to me."

Big Bill scratched his head reflectively at this disquieting news. Then an obviously simple solution of the problem flashed to his mind.

"Let's us buy the mortgage and protect Joyce that way."

"Bill, I'm surprised you have stayed here as long as you have," Johnny dryly informed his partner. "Do you think that whoever owns the mortgage is going to sell it now with a lease like that in sight? Not in a million years. They're going to sit tight and grab the whole works. If the well isn't producing in five days, it's good-night."

Bill relapsed into a meditative silence as this new and enlightening angle was brought to his view-point. He puckered his face as if he were giving an elusive idea a close run for its money. Johnny's voice brought him back to earth.

"I'm going out and rustle round a bit. Maybe I can uncover the fine Italian hand at the bottom of this. If I can locate the nigger in the wood-pile, will you help me put the skids under him?"

"The sky's the limit," Big Bill agreed, lapsing into the *argot* of his former vocation.

So Johnny got out and rustled—rustled long and hard and faithfully. In two hours he was back, his gaze placid in its marble serenity.

Big Bill, adept from constant practise in reading Johnny's moods, sensed that there was trouble brewing.

"What?" he laconically inquired.

"Give you one guess and tip you off it's the biggest crook in the field." Johnny grinned.

"Amos Crowder?"

Johnny's grin widened.

"That's the skunk."

"How'd you find out?"

"Well," Johnny explained, "I found out who the crews went to work for when they quit Joyce. Then I played a hunch and telephoned over to the county-seat and had a quick search made of the recent mortgage transfers. The party who hired the crews just recently paid a fat bonus to the bank that held the mortgage and took it over. I didn't need to ask who bought up all the loose pipe in the field—not after that. Now, listen; I got a scheme to cook Mr. Amos in his own essence."

Big Bill bent an attentive ear, and his face gradually expanded into a grin of malicious appreciation.

"I ain't much of a fireman, but I'm sure enough a good cook," he confided. "But how about Miss Joyce? Will she stand for it?"

Johnny's voice fairly reeked with guile.

"She's leaving in an hour for a conference with her banker. She doesn't know they've sold the mortgage."

A VERY short time afterward, Johnny was helping Joyce into one of the automobiles which made daily trips from Tinker's Ridge to the railroad. If his conscience troubled him over his failure to inform the girl of the futility of her trip, his expression did not betray it. A poker-face had Johnny, and he believed in playing a hunch to the limit. Furthermore, when Johnny played, he wanted no one around to distract his attention.

"Good-by and good luck!" he wished guilelessly. And his eyes declared, "I love you."

"Thanks! I'll be back in a few days," Joyce responded, and her eyes answered, "I know you do, but you must be patient."

Of course, Johnny did not realize it and Joyce would never have admitted it, nevertheless, things are drawing to a conclusion when eyes talk thus.

The next hour was a busy one for Johnny Hutchinson. He first went to a local lumber-yard, where he contracted for several truck-loads of rough lumber. By the payment of a substantial bonus he obtained promise of an immediate delivery at the preacher's lease. Next, scouring the highways and the byways, and offering an almost incredible wage, he corralled a gang of roughnecks that could do the sort of carpenter-work he desired. This mob he led to the lumber-yard, with instructions to ride out on the lumber-laden

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

trucks. Then he went back to the Faro Oil Company's office and picked up Big Bill. They drove to a store, where they loaded the car with a plentiful supply of canned edibles. After that they headed toward the field.

Johnny drove carefully, sunk deep in thought. With mechanical precision he picked his way through the maze of rutty roads, crossing hissing steam-pipes here, dodging oil-drenched mud-holes there. A little dubious sense of misgiving beset him as he pondered on what they were about to do. Could they pull off the contemplated job after all, he questioned. It was a thickly populated world—this fomenting, steaming, noisy inferno, where derricks, standing as thick as the law would allow, resembled toothpicks stuck upright in the crust of an enormous pie. But this ant-hill of energy, he reassured himself, was all to their advantage. Few knew and fewer cared what went on outside their own holdings. Oil-scouts and curiosity seekers were the only ones who would be likely to smell a rat, and he would leave those to Bill's gentle ministrations. And, too, the pressure of the cylindrical object in his pocket imparted a queer feeling of comfort. Mentally he compared the chance he was taking with the constant peril he gloried in when he used to sit in the lookout's chair. He laughed aloud. They were not dissimilar, he thought.

He stopped the car close by the small shack which served as an office and tool-house. While Big Bill carried the groceries inside, Johnny gave the rig a careful going-over. As he hoped, the deserting crew had left everything shipshape. Poking round, he unearthed even the log of the well, brought up to the time the drilling ceased. He studied it minutely, comparing it with records he fished from his pocket.

"Only a hundred feet to pay-sand, if the formation runs true, and it's dollars to doughnuts it will. Three days ought to complete it," he mused. Further search revealed extra bits and a strainer. He chuckled at this. So far, everything seemed to be in the clear.

The arrival of the lumber-laden trucks now shifted his activities in a new direction. With a few brief words he outlined the work in hand and promised an attractive bonus for every hour saved. In a space of time which seemed almost Aladdin-like, the entire drilling rig, including office and boiler-house, was surrounded by a tight board fence some ten feet high.

"Guess that will hold 'em," he soliloquized, as he surveyed the work. He paid off the temporary crew of carpenters and saw them headed back toward town. They had evinced no great amount of curiosity. This boarding-off of an uncompleted well was an oft-played game where onlookers or information seekers were persons *non grata*.

He looked at his watch, whistled his surprise at the flight of time, and hailed Big Bill, who was busy transforming the tool-house into a temporary kitchen.

"I'm gone," he announced.

AND then—some half an hour later a heavily laden truck, traveling the main road through the field, stopped at Johnny's peremptory signal.

"Is that Amos Crowder's six-inch?" he asked.

The driver nodded.

"For his Number Three well," he affirmed.

To a mere observer, Johnny's manner would have appeared almost casually negligent. But from beneath his indolently drooping lids the eyes of him were shrewd and discerning. Both hands were sunk in his pockets, one gently caressing a miniature cannon, the other fingering a roll of bills. Johnny, appraising the driver keenly, came to the decision that he was a weak sister. Playing another hunch, he relinquished the grip on his pistol and drew forth the roll of bills. Climbing up on the seat beside the driver, he conferred with him long and earnestly. The driver vacillated between duty and desire, and duty lost out. A yellow bill flashed from palm to palm, and the driver, starting his truck, swung off the main road and onto the trail which led to the preacher's lease.

After the last joint of pipe had clanged to the pile beside the derrick, Johnny approached, and another bill changed hands.

"Just drive back past Crowder's lease and tell him you unloaded here according to orders. That will be sufficient."

With a wink and a grin, the truck-driver cranked his engine, Johnny watched him

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

take the right turn, then sauntered within the enclosure, a quizzical smile on his face.

It was but a short space before a high-powered car snorted up and stopped beside the gate. A man whose face was an open advertisement as to his methods of doing business descended. Shaking in a palsy of almost uncontrollable passion, he fairly flung himself through the gate. Amos Crowder's life had been more or less a succession of surprises, but he had never been more disconcerted. Johnny's manner was one of urbane causticity.

"Made better time than I expected," he pleasantly observed, as he swung shut the gate. "I'm sure glad you came. Nothing like being prompt when you're invited out."

Amos's wrath boiled over in a volley of vicious curses. Johnny raised his hand as if he would calm the excited man.

"Same old Amos," he observed wearily. "Starts to swear when things break wrong. Now, you listen"—and his drawling voice held an ugly little snap—"cussing, threats or argument won't get you a thing. You are going to visit here for three, four days. Not because we want you, but because it's necessary. Personally, I'm not going to have much time to waste on you. I'll turn you over to Bill, here. If you talk right pleasant to him, you might be able to persuade him to show you how to play a straight game—cards or anything else. March—into the tool-house, you skunk!"

Wrenching his fascinated eyes away from Johnny's side coat pocket, where the outline of a hand tight grasped round a suspicious-looking cylinder was visible, Amos marched.

A few minutes afterward, Amos's car whirled up to his Number Three well, and Johnny, stepping out, walked up a small incline and onto the derrick floor. The driller instinctively threw out his slow clutch as he felt something hard and round and chill poked into the small of his back.

"Quiet now," Johnny cautioned in a voice that was deadly in spite of its nonchalant calm. "You all know who I am?" He raised his voice to include the two roughnecks who were on the opposite side of the derrick. The three nodded in unison. Few there were in the field of Tinker's Ridge to whom Johnny's reputation was not familiar. "All right, then"—and his voice was pitched to a sinister softness as he toyed with his pistol—"I'll tell you this much: I mean business from the ground up. The least thing is liable to make me nervous and start me shooting. You all go on with your work until the night-crew comes."

Sensing the grim threat underlying the quiet tones, the crew went on about their duties. Johnny stood watching them impassively until the relief-crew had arrived on the derrick floor. His eyes took a quick inventory—two drillers, four roughnecks and two derrick-men. With Big Bill acting as cook and fireman, he could get by, he concluded.

He spoke again, crisp, sharp and to the point. Marshaling the subdued crews in front of him, he herded them toward the car. As he passed the boiler-house he stepped aside and spoke to the fireman.

"You can shut down for a few days," he said. "Crowder has been called away and is sending this crew over on another job temporarily."

The fireman, seeing Amos's car, nodded unsuspectingly. Johnny laughed inside. This had turned out even better than he had hoped. The fireman saw nothing amiss and would no doubt spread the news that Crowder had been unexpectedly called away. So far, things had broken well. Johnny congratulated himself. If the rest went as smoothly, they would see what they would see.

AND then—seventy hours afterward, on the preacher's lease, the hundred-and-twelve-foot derrick creaked and groaned with its weighty load. High up on the finger-boards the nimble derrick-man pushed and guided coupled joints of swinging six-inch as if they were pieces of pith. The engine coughed and grunted; the revolving drum grumbled harshly under its burden; the cable whipped and whined its vibrant symphony, and the traveling block shrieked a rasping cry for oil.

The last hundred feet had been achieved; the strainer had been set, and the six-inch was going into the hole for the final test. Johnny Hutchinson, dead on his feet, eyes red-rimmed and body drooping for want of sleep, braced himself against an upright on the derrick floor and intently watched every phase of the operation.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Seventy straight hours had Johnny stood on the floor of the drilling rig, argus-eyed, vigilant, watchful. And seventy hours the slush-pumps had "whoosh-whooshed" their continuous song; seventy hours the rotary had ground out its raucous, nerve-shattering bellow; seventy hours the chain had clacked and rapped its staccato bark, and seventy hours the slithering, oil-fouled cable had coiled and uncoiled in snarling protest on its drum.

Seventy consecutive, anxious hours had seared and blistered and dulled every nerve-fiber in Johnny's being. Not for one instant had he closed his eyes. True, the impressed crews had entered into the spirit of the thing after their surprise and chagrin at the enforced kidnaping had worn off. True, they had disdainfully scorned Johnny's proffered reward should they bring in a gusher, and had ungrudgingly given him their best. True, Big Bill had performed his multitudinous duties as fireman, cook and watchman in an irreproachable manner. But seventy hours of constant vigil—for, in spite of all, Johnny never relaxed his watchfulness one whit—was beginning to take its toll from his iron frame. No perceptible influence toward keeping him awake had the cups of strong coffee which Big Bill constantly supplied. Johnny was beyond the effect of mere stimulants. Only his resolute tenacity of purpose and his stark control of nerves prevented him from toppling over, dead to the world. But now the six-inch was going down—down for the last time.

In a hazy dream, as if were peering through an opalescent veil, Johnny saw the last joint disappear into the hole, saw the Christmas tree, that complicated contraption of gates and valves, adjusted, saw the bailer vanish within the pipe.

Down and up, down and up, on its half-mile journey the bailer traveled until it seemed to the mesmerized Johnny to have become the one remaining prop of his existence.

Both drillers were on the derrick floor, and at every emptying of the bailer became more and more excited. For now shimmering, iridescent, filmy streaks of oil tinted with opal colors the turgid fluid which the bailer brought forth.

Once more the bailer descended, the cable unwinding snakily from its drum. But it never reached the bottom. For a moment it hesitated, and before the driller could reverse for the wind-up, it shot from the hole, propelled by some unleashed power below. Deflected by the finger-boards from its course toward the crown-block, it cleared the derrick, dragging after it the snarled and twisted cable. Then came roaring forth a stream of brownish golden oil, moaning, shrieking, thundering, as it shot from its subterranean tomb, drenching the surrounding country in a viscid, sticky coat. Like a rabbit for a pile of brush, the driller dove for the gate-valve and shut off the golden flood.

Before the dazed Johnny had fully realized what had happened, his consciousness was pierced by a prolonged, ear-splitting blast. Big Bill was bending to the whistle-cord. Another gusher had been brought in.

TEN minutes later Johnny was escorting the fuming, frustrated Amos to his automobile, which had been driven outside the enclosure. Half awake, he watched him enter the machine, drive off a little way and stop. Still in a daze, he watched while Amos fumbled in the pockets of the car. Only when he caught the dull metallic flash in the other's hand did Johnny realize what was about to happen.

Forcing himself out of the overpowering lethargy which threatened to engulf him, he reached for his own gun. As if a thousand tons were dragging it down, he raised his arm.

Like the point of a needle dragged across his scalp, he felt a tiny, searing pain, but he paid no heed. Insensible was he to the tiny trickle of crimson that ran down his forehead, oblivious also to the girl who, flinging herself from a newly arrived car, rushed to him. Every atom of thought, every shred of will was bent on the one endeavor to focus his aim. Then his gun cracked, and Amos, dropping his pistol, grabbed, cursing, at a broken wrist.

For a moment Johnny stood, pistol still upraised, striving to pierce the fast-gathering cloud before his eyes. As he fought to keep himself awake, a pair of arms were flung about his neck. Indistinctly he saw an oval face swimming in a pool of darkness.

And then—Johnny Hutchinson—square guy—went to sleep on his feet.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The Amazing Redemption of a Derelict

Mellowing Money

Archer Griffith Stays on in Bethsaida, and the Town Is Treated to an Extraordinary Series of Mysteries and Thrills Which Move to a Startling and Serious Climax

By Francis Lynde

Author of "The Real Man," "The Wreckers," "Pirates Hope," etc.

Illustrations by J. M. Clement

Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

IT APPEALED to Archer Griffith's sense of the ironic that an unsympathetic brakeman should have put him off at Bethsaida, the one place that in his three years of hoboing he had most carefully avoided. Slow, unprogressive Bethsaida was yet expeditious in the handling of tramps, and within an hour of his arrival he was arrested for vagrancy and sentenced to thirty days with the street-repairing gang.

Neither the constable nor the judge, both of them old friends of his father, recognized in the unkempt, shabby man who gave his name as "Tom Archer" the Archer Griffith who had left Bethsaida six years before to go to war.

He was soon discovered, however, and John Kingsley, a college classmate and intimate, secured his release and invited him to be his guest until he could make other plans. Griffith's first impulse was to get out of town as quickly as possible. Then, on second thought, he decided to stay, for a time at least. It would be amusing to watch Bethsaida, narrow, self-righteous, hypocritical, writhe at seeing one of her native sons parade his dereliction, unashamed, in her midst.

He warned Kingsley that he must not expect anything like gratitude from him.

"I'm a bum in all that the word connotes," he told his friend. "There is nothing left in me that you could appeal to if you should be foolish enough to try."

Kingsley alternated between the belief that half of Griffith's hardness was pose and the conviction that he had understated it. It was Margery Stillwell who urged patience, and insisted that Griffith's redemption was possible. Margery had been a friend of both men since their school-days, and Kingsley made no secret of the fact that he was an unsuccessful suitor.

Another friend Griffith found in Bethsaida. This was Roxanna Gaffney, whose father kept a pool-room in town and a road-house of evil repute a little way out in the country. Griffith had in the old days treated the girl better than most of her father's patrons, and while still in the street-repairing gang she had offered him refuge with her father if he would escape. This he did not accept, but later became a "capper" for the card games at the road-house, and used Roxanna's car going back and forth.

One evening Kingsley, who had been

Copyright, 1923, by Francis Lynde.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

looking harassed for several days, told Griffith that he had got himself involved with Amos Whittlesea. Whittlesea was the town banker—a miser and usurer, who had most of the countryside in his debt and sooner or later squeezed out all on whom he got his clutches. The odds seemed all against Kingsley, for part of the understanding was verbal, and old Amos held all of his stock in the Star Works as security.

Griffith's wrath rose at Kingsley's recital, for his father had been one of Whittlesea's victims. Griffith, senior, had lived only a month after the sale of his newspaper and his home.

After the revelation of his involvement with Whittlesea, Kingsley left Griffith on the home porch to go back to the plant and work. When he had gone, Griffith turned over in his pocket a letter which had come to him through the general delivery. In the weeks that he had been in Bethsaida he had almost forgotten his wife. Before going overseas he had married a woman who, he learned upon his return from France, was several times a war-bride. She claimed that Griffith was the first man she married and he could not disprove it; nor, it seemed, could he escape her. This meant that he must depart from Bethsaida at once.

He left the house and started toward the gate, so deep in his reflections that he did not notice the click of the latch. When the gate opened, his impulse was to flee, but it was too late. It was Margery Stillwell who came up the walk. She had been calling on her aunt, who lived next door.

FOR a moment neither spoke. Then the young woman held out her hand and said half hesitantly,

"It's you; isn't it, Archer?" The shadow of the althea bush made it difficult for her to be certain.

"Yes," he answered.

"And John—is he in the house?"

"No; he has gone back to the shops. I'll chase him for you if you want him."

"No, indeed! It was just a bit of Aunt Mary's nervousness. She made me promise to ask John to walk home with me. These burglaries, you know; they've upset everybody."

"I'm sorry John isn't here. Shall I call old Uncle Ephraim?"

"Certainly not! I'm not afraid; it was Aunt Mary. Were you going down my way?"

"Yes; but not with you."

"Why not with me?"

"Because it would be as much as your good name is worth to be seen with me."

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed. "Haven't we outgrown such things as that?"

"You may have, but Bethsaida hasn't."

"Of course, if you don't want to—" she began; and at that he opened the gate for her, soberly taking his place beside her when she stepped out upon the sidewalk.

"That is more sensible," she said, and then, "Why haven't you been to see us—daddy and me?"

"I think you know very well why I haven't."

"Do I? Don't the old times count for anything?"

"They shouldn't, in this case."

"I think they should, and John thinks they should."

"John is an easy mark," he offered. "Up to within a few days I've been eating his food, wearing his clothes and gambling with his money."

"And you are not ashamed to tell me?"

"Apparently I am not. That is why I say that the old times shouldn't count—with you."

"Are you trying to make it hard for me, Archer?"

"No; I am only trying to present the facts as they are. But John has probably told you what you ought to know."

"He has told me some things that make me sorry."

"That," he said definitely, "is a waste of perfectly good emotion. And you mustn't waste it on me. I am here to-day and gone to-morrow."

"You are going to leave Bethsaida?"

"Very shortly."

"Where will you go?"

"I never think of that beforehand."

Silence for perhaps half a square, and then,

"Do you really like being nothing, Archer?"

"Can't you imagine a state of mind in which the likes and dislikes have all disappeared? Or is that quite beyond you?"

"Tell me," she said briefly.

"It can be told in a sentence. I have

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"That is more sensible," she said, and then, "Why haven't you been to see us—daddy and me?"
"I think you know very well why I haven't."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

made a wreck of my life, Margie—a total wreck. If I should turn short about to-night and try to be something better than a hobo, I would find it impossible."

"Why would it be impossible?"

"Because wrecks entail consequences that can't be dodged or run away from. There are life-mistakes that can never be rectified. I have made at least one of them."

"But one needn't go on making mistakes to the end of the chapter."

It was an *impasse*. He felt that neither she nor John Kingsley nor any normally well-behaved person could understand. So he let another half-square go by without making any further attempt at explanation. Then the young woman began again.

"You are not letting the gossips drive you away from Bethsaida, are you?"

He made a chuckling noise in his throat and said,

"The one near-pleasure I have been able to extract out of staying on here has come from the fact that I'm so damnably unwelcome."

"You are very hard," she said, and her voice trembled a little.

"That is what I have been trying to make you understand. You may call it a pose if you like; probably you are calling it a pose. But it isn't; it is just a lack."

They had reached the Stillwell gate, and he opened it for her. In spite of all that had been said, she asked him if he wouldn't come in.

His refusal was short and emphatic.

"I wish you would," she urged. "I feel as though we had hardly touched the surface of things in these few minutes. And there is something I wanted to ask you."

"Ask it here and now."

"It is about those foolish boys—William Harriford, Lester Clemmer, Matt Jefferson—that set. You know the way they are going."

"Well?"

"I think you must know what I want to say."

"Surely. You think I am setting them a bad example and helping them along on the downward way. A few nights ago you saw William Harriford pull a gun on me and accuse me of cheating him at cards. I saw you in John's car out in front of the Gaffney road-house."

"Had you cheated him?" she demanded.

"As it happened, I hadn't. But that isn't saying that I wouldn't have cheated him if I had needed to."

Again she said:

"You are very hard—harder than I supposed anybody could ever be. William Harriford is breaking his mother's heart."

"I didn't know that Julia Harriford had any heart to break," he denied. And with that he said an abrupt "Good night," and walked on.

THAT was one night when Roxanna Gaffney, waiting at her father's town place to drive Griffith out to the road-house, waited in vain. Turning short to the left a half-square below the Stillwell cottage, he tramped through the scattering suburb and struck into a country road, disappearing, so far as any exonerating witness could tell, for a period of four full hours. When he returned to the house at the head of Maple Avenue, Kingsley had not yet gone to bed. He was walking the floor in the living-room, and he whirled about with a jerk as Griffith came in.

"Archer, can you prove to the satisfaction of a jury where you were at half-past ten o'clock to-night?" he demanded, and the shotlike question was almost an accusation.

Griffith dropped into a chair and lit a cigarette.

"I don't know that I could. Why?"

"Then you haven't heard?"

"What was there to hear?"

"Another burglary—this time with a near-murder. Old man Southwick, out on the Bethany road. He had sold some cattle and still had the money in the house. He heard a noise, and when he got up the burglar attacked him—shot him. They were bringing him in to Dr. Grimshaw's for treatment as I came up from the office. I helped carry him in to Grimshaw's operating-room."

"All right," said Griffith indifferently. "What then?"

"Before he went under the ether he made a statement. He said you were the man who shot him—that in the tussle he recognized you. They are looking for you now. Were you out at Gaffney's road-house at half-past ten o'clock?"

"No."

"Can you prove where you were?"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"No."

"Good Lord, man! Wake up! Don't you see what this is going to let you in for? It'll be twenty years if you're convicted—or worse if the old man dies. Where were you an hour and a half ago?"

Before Griffith could answer, if he were intending to answer, there was a shuffling of heavy footfalls on the porch, the click of the front-door latch, and the town marshal and two deputies, one of them with a shotgun held at the ready, burst into the living-room.

"Sorry to have to break in on you this way, John, without knockin', but we couldn't take no chances," wheezed the breathless majesty of the law. Then to Griffith: "You git up and come along with us, young man. I guess when we git you locked up *this* time, you'll stay put!"

At the muzzle of the shotgun Griffith was handcuffed, and Kingsley could do no more than assure him that help would be forthcoming in the morning. To the assurance, or to the gruff commands of the old peace-officer, the derelict made no answer; and a few minutes later, after a marching progress through the silent midnight streets, he was thrust once more into the iron-plated cell from which, some three weeks earlier, Kingsley's friendly intervention had liberated him.

TWENTY-FOUR hours after Griffith's arrest as the alleged assailant of farmer Southwick, John Kingsley was easily the most unpopular man in Bethsaida, not excepting the old miser-president of the Security Bank, whose action, however, was almost as severely condemned as that of the young ironmaster.

Losing no time after Griffith had been taken to jail, Kingsley had called a certain shrewd criminal lawyer of the twenty-mile-away county-seat, got him out of bed to answer the telephone, and secured his promise to be in Bethsaida to act as Griffith's counsel at the preliminary examination before Justice Bradford. The lawyer had so far bettered his promise as to reach Bethsaida in time to eat an early breakfast with Kingsley at the St. Nicholas Hotel, and before ten o'clock, the hour set for the examination, he had had a conference with Griffith in his cell and had busied himself to good purpose in other directions.

To the astoundment of all Bethsaida, packing the justice's small court-room and the adjoining jail-corridor to suffocation, the prisoner's counsel was able to make a case of a sort. A second statement obtained from the wounded farmer, after the bullet had been dug out of his shoulder and he had been assured that the wound wasn't going to prove mortal, admitted considerable doubt as to the identity of the burglar. It transpired that the man had worn a mask of some sort, and that the room in which the struggle had taken place had been unlit save by the moon. Also, it appeared from Southwick's statement that his assailant was short and rather heavy-set, and that his demand for the money had been made in broken English.

In spite of the doubt thus cast upon the farmer's first assertion—that he had recognized Griffith as his attacker—Justice Joel stuck strictly to precedent. Griffith was bound over to wait the action of the grand jury, and his bail was fixed at the sum of ten thousand dollars, an amount which Bradford assumed would be sufficiently large to insure the commitment of the prisoner to the county jail. It was at this point in the proceedings that Bethsaida received its greatest shock. Two bondsmen were required if bail were to be given, and Kingsley promptly offered as one of them. This was more or less expected; but when old Amos Whittlesea pushed his way through the throng and offered to sign with Kingsley, the packed court-room and corridor went fairly aghast.

Since the two responsible citizens required by the statutes were thus ready to sign, Bradford could not retreat. The bail-bond was executed and Griffith was set at liberty. But now Travers, the prisoner's counsel, intervened. Addressing the court in an impassioned appeal which certainly had no warrant in any Bethsaidan threat of a mob outbreak, he asked that his client be taken back to his cell and given the protection of the law until such time as it might be safe for him to appear in public. Though the old justice had no precedent for this and was plainly amazed at the suggestion that the citizens of well-behaved Bethsaida might be tempted to take the law into their own hands, he gave the order, and Griffith was locked up accordingly.

It was at their luncheon together in the

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

St. Nicholas café that the lawyer explained to Kingsley.

"Good Lord, no!" He laughed. "I wasn't afraid of a lynching in this church-going town! What I wanted, and what I got, was protection of quite another sort. I wanted to make sure that Griffith wouldn't have a chance to talk too much until after the excitement has had time to die down a bit. It won't hurt him to stay in jail for a day or so—not when he knows he's due to get out pretty soon."

"You were afraid he might say something to prejudice his case?" Kingsley asked.

"There is always some danger of that when a man is foot-loose on bail. And there is more than a little in Griffith's case. Did he tell you where he was last night?"

"No. He hadn't been in the house more than ten minutes before Maitland and his deputies came after him."

"Well, he told me when I talked with him before the examination, and I'll confess it looked rather bad. While he denied the crime, of course, he admitted that he was out on the Bethany road, without any apparent good excuse—said he was just taking a moonlight ramble in the country. That may be true, but it's going to be mighty hard to make a jury believe that he was out there without having some object in view. Can you throw any light on it?"

"Not the least in the world. As I told you at breakfast, I left him sitting on the porch at my house when I went down to my office. That was about half-past seven or a quarter to eight. I asked him if he wouldn't come along, and he said he had an engagement."

"Did he tell you what it was?"

"He as good as admitted that he was going out to Gaffney's road-house on the Willow Springs road to play cards. He has been running with that bunch and striking a pretty rapid gait, I'm afraid."

"Which is all to the bad," was the lawyer's comment. Then he shot a direct question across the table. "Give me the inside, Kingsley. You've been having a surge of these burglaries in the past fortnight or so—what's your candid opinion—strictly between us two?"

Kingsley took time to consider, and when he spoke it was to say:

"Honestly, Travers, I don't know. I don't want to believe it of Archer; I sha'n't believe it until I'm obliged to. But, according to his own admissions, he has broken with all the decent traditions. It is common talk here that he has been acting as a stool-pigeon for the Gaffney resort, and the indications all point that way. And I am afraid it is also true that he has been deliberately skinning our few make-believe young rounders over the card-table. There you have it, or as much as I know. Whether he would stop short of burglary and the hold-up man's job, I really can't say."

"Yet you went on his bond."

"Oh, yes. My better judgment balked a bit, but there are other things besides judgment. We grew up together."

"I SEE," said the lawyer, lighting one of the two cigars the waiter had just brought. "The boyhood association accounts for you; but how about old man Whittlesea?"

"That was a knock out—for me and for everybody else, I imagine. I wouldn't have been more astonished if the jail roof had fallen in. So far as I know, Griffith has met Whittlesea only once since he came back to Bethsaida—found the old man with a broken-down car on the Willow Springs road one day and gave him a lift."

"The lift would hardly account for Whittlesea's signing of a ten-thousand-dollar bail-bond; would it?"

"I should say not! Besides, from what Griffith told me of the incident, it would seem that there was no love lost on either side during the chance meeting. Whittlesea told him that the town was suspecting him of the burglaries, or something to that effect, and rather gloated over the telling—or so I gathered from what Griffith said."

"Then what was Whittlesea's object in coming forward this morning, pen in hand?"

"You can search me," said Kingsley. "I can think of only one motive that might go with the old man's character. Whittlesea is a hard creditor, and he has earned the ill will of nearly everybody who has had dealings with him. He makes no secret of the fact that the ill will is returned in full measure. If he thought it would spite the town to have Griffith turned loose on bail——"

"I get you." Travers nodded. "It's not much of a motive to risk money on, but

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

I guess it will have to do in the absence of any other."

"There is another possibility," Kingsley said, after a thoughtful moment, "but I can't seem to make it fit Whittlesea. Do you know what he did to Griffith's father just after the armistice?"

"Sold him out, didn't he?"

"Yes, and pretty savagely. Griffith, senior was one of the best of men, but no business man, and he was never able to make the newspaper pay its way. Consequently he was always in debt to Whittlesea, and the old man, as usual, had a mortgage on everything in sight. Just before the smash Griffith had a chance to sell the paper to a Michigan man at a reasonably good figure. Some way or other the story got out that the prospective buyer was pretty radical in his views, and that he had it in for banks in general and for the country-town banks in particular——"

"You needn't tell the rest of it," the lawyer interrupted, with a shrewd smile. "Whittlesea smashed the deal by foreclosing on Griffith, of course."

"He did; and at the sheriff's sale he bought in everything that Griffith had—at practically his own figure. Griffith died within a month. His health had been poor for a couple of years."

"I can see your other possibility," said Travers. "For the ordinary human being there might have been some daggerings of remorse working in the court-room this morning. Is that it?"

"That is what I had in mind. But if Whittlesea has ever suffered any remorse-pangs for any of the thousand and one harsh things he has done in the past, he has very successfully concealed them from the public eye. Still, you can't always tell."

"No," the lawyer agreed; "you can't. But we needn't worry over the question of motives. The principal fact is that Whittlesea did sign with you, and in consequence Griffith won't have to languish in jail pending the assembling of the grand jury." He glanced at his watch. "I'll have to be moving along; I want to get back on that one-thirty train. I'll ask to have Griffith turned loose in a day or so, and I'm going to put it up to you to keep a string on him. Don't let him do anything that will make it harder for him when his case comes up for trial."

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Kingsley went as far as the sidewalk with the departing attorney.

"Then you think the grand jury will find a true bill and indict him?" was his final question.

"It won't if I can help it," Travers said, with a wink indicative of resources not to be spoken of in public. "Let me know if anything new develops. You can always get me over the long distance. Good-by."

HAVING neglected his own affairs for an entire forenoon, Kingsley went directly to his plant across the railroad tracks after the luncheon with Travers at the hotel, and as he approached his office he saw the battered little runabout that Judson Stillwell used in going back and forth between his town house and the farm at Walnut Grove drawn up in front of the Star works. He wondered what Margery's father was doing over in Industryville, but the wonder disappeared when he opened his office door and found that it was Margery, and not her father, who was waiting for him.

"I simply could not wait until evening, when you might come by the house, and the telephone is too public," she explained eagerly. "Tell me all about it. I don't know a single thing more than the *Telegraph* told in the skimpy little gasp it ran under the big head-lines."

Kingsley sat back in his pivot chair regarding her thoughtfully for a moment through half-closed eyes. It struck him at once that there was something more than mere friendly curiosity in the flushed face and eager manner. And her beauty, under the stimulus of repressed excitement, fairly made him ache.

"The *Telegraph* couldn't print much; I imagine they held the press for the little they did get in," he said. And from that he went on to tell her of the happenings of the night and the forenoon.

"Then Archer is still in jail?" she asked.

"Yes; but only for a day or two—until the excitement dies down. Travers made the request. He seemed to think it necessary, or, at least, prudent."

"Horrors!" She shuddered. "There wasn't any talk of lynching; was there?"

"No; not that I heard. Of course, the town is frightfully stirred up, as it has a right to be, and if people were certain that

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Archer is the man who has been committing all these burglaries there might be trouble. But there is no certainty about it—yet. Even Southwick wasn't sure of his identification when he was asked to make a deposition under oath."

"Still, everybody believes it was Archer?"

"Naturally."

"Not everybody. I don't, for one."

Kingsley's smile was patient.

"Any reason—except the traditional woman's reason?"

"I suppose not—nothing that would appeal to you. But I don't believe it—won't believe it."

"All right. I'll borrow a little of your confidence and try to stay with you."

"What will Archer do when he gets out of jail? Won't it be impossible for him to stay here in Bethsaida while he is waiting to find out what the grand jury will do?"

"It will be decidedly uncomfortable, to say the least. Every move he makes will be tabbed, and the tabbings will be made to count against him."

"I don't believe—I can't believe he is as bad as he tries to make himself out to be," the young woman insisted warmly.

"I don't want to shake your faith in him or in human nature, Margery—please don't think that. But after you've met him and talked with him——"

"I have met him and talked with him."

"You have? When and where?"

"Last night, at your gate. I had been up to Aunt Mary Penniman's, and he walked home with me. But he wouldn't do it until I fairly made him. Aunt Mary was afraid to have me go home alone, and Uncle Jared hadn't come back from the farm. She made me promise to step in and ask you to go with me. I met Archer at the gate as I was going in, and he said you had just left."

"What did he have to say for himself?"

"Nothing more than what he has probably said to you. But it's a pose, John—an unconscious one, perhaps, but a pose just the same. He isn't so utterly abandoned as he tries to make people believe he is."

"How you can be sure of that is beyond me," Kingsley averred. "So far, he hasn't said or done a single thing to make people think that he isn't perfectly sincere when he claims to have put all the decencies behind him."

"But I am sure that he hasn't—just as sure as I am that the sun is shining this minute. And I can say this in spite of all the hard things he said to me last night."

"Your faith is the most beautiful thing in the world, Margie. Where do you get it?"

"I can't tell. I just *know*. It's—maybe it's a sort of clairvoyance—only, I don't believe in occult things. But while Archer was talking to me last night, I could tell just as well as could be that it wasn't—well, it wasn't the real Archer."

KINGSLEY looked away, and his thoughts flew back to the irresponsible years and to his own and Griffith's homecomings from college for the long summer vacations. In those happier days "Tom Arch," as everybody called him, had not been anathema to all Bethsaida. It was only the older folk who had looked frowningly upon what they had been pleased to call his "dissipations." For the younger set he had been an idol in the college athlete gallery. Margery Stillwell was only a schoolgirl at that time, but she had been as much at home in the Griffith house as in her father's. Had a seed been sown in those hero-worshiping years which was just now germinating? Kingsley wondered.

"I haven't your precious gift of utter loyalty, Margie," he confessed, at the end of the reflective pause. "I don't mean to let go; you mustn't think that. But there are times when I am strongly tempted to take Archer at his own valuation of himself, though I am free to say that I can't conceive of any combination of circumstances that could pull a man of his upbringing and gifts and character down to the level he claims to have reached."

"Can't you? I can. Are you forgetting that dreadful woman in New York?"

"No; but she is out of it. That has been a back number for three years."

"I have been wondering if she *is* out of it."

"What makes you doubt it? Did Archer say anything about her last night?"

"Of course he didn't—to me. But this is what makes me doubt it." And she handed Kingsley an unopened letter bearing the New York city postmark.

Kingsley examined the letter curiously, reading the misspelled address and trying to decipher the date in the postmark.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Where did you get this?" he asked.

"Archer had it in his pocket. As he left me last night at our gate, he took his handkerchief out and I thought I saw something fall to the sidewalk, but I wasn't sure. After he had gone so far that I couldn't call to him, an auto passed, and in the light of the head-lamps I saw the letter and went out and picked it up."

Kingsley shook his head.

"It doesn't prove anything."

"No; but it is a woman's handwriting."

He looked at the address again.

"Maybe," he conceded. Then, "Do you want me to give it back to him?"

"Yes; only, I'd rather you wouldn't tell him where you got it."

She had risen and was pulling on her driving-gloves. Kingsley went to the curb with her.

"I may have to call upon you for help when Archer is turned loose," he said, after she had slipped in behind the wheel of the battered runabout. Then he told her what the lawyer had said about keeping Griffith in hand pending the grand-jury inquest.

"I'll do anything I can," was her promise, and she drove away.

TWO days later, upon a formal request from his counsel, Griffith was set free, and Kingsley, who had been advised of the day and hour, met him at the jail door and took him home. Griffith was silent during the short drive, and said little afterward save to enter a protest about the bail-bond.

"You've done a good many foolish things since you paid my fine and took me out of the street-gang, John," he said, as they were lighting the pipes on the home porch, "but the signing of that bond was the cap-sheaf of them all. I haven't given you the slightest reason to believe that I won't jump my bond and disappear."

"No, you haven't," Kingsley agreed.

"What makes you think I won't do it—and leave you and old Amos to hold the bag?"

"To tell the plain truth, I haven't thought much about it. I've had other things to worry me," said the bond-signer half absently.

"Exactly," was the cool reply. "A fifty-thousand-dollar note falling due within the next few days."

"You haven't forgotten, it seems."

"No. But for some forty-eight hours I've been wondering."

"What about?"

Silence for a long minute; then,

"Was I a true prophet about that big borrow of yours, John?"

"I am afraid you were. Whittlesea isn't saying anything himself, but I've had a hint from Larkin, his bookkeeper. Larkin was a good friend of dad's, and he tells me to look out for myself."

"But didn't you say you had Whittlesea's promise to let you renew at the end of thirty days?"

"It was more or less conditional. I was so sure that the Australian deal would break right——"

"I see," said Griffith. "You told him you'd make a payment on the note. And now you find that you can't do it."

Another period of silence, and at the end of it Kingsley unloaded.

"I'm worried stiff, Arch—and that's no merry jest. If Whittlesea puts the screws on I'm done—smashed, wiped out. I was a crazy fool to let him have my stock."

"I thought so at the time," was the unsympathetic comment. Then, "How much longer do you have to live?"

"The thirty days will be up next Friday."

Griffith's release from jail had fallen upon the Monday evening. Kingsley, driving home for luncheon on the Tuesday, found that he had returned to his earlier method of time-killing—smoking a pipe and reading an old book in the library. Margery Stillwell was at her gate as Kingsley was driving back to his office, and he pulled up at the curb.

"All serene so far," he reported. "I took him home last night in time for dinner, and he didn't offer to go out anywhere afterward. And Mandy says he's been sitting in the library, reading, all morning."

She nodded, and asked,

"What would happen if daddy and I should drop in on you for a neighborly call this evening?"

"Fine!" he applauded. "If we can contrive to keep him away from the Gaffney bunch, that will be something gained."

Accordingly, quite early in the evening, the call was made, and when the gate opened to admit the stockily-built, sober-faced old farmer and his pretty daughter, Griffith did not bolt for cover, as Kingsley feared he

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

might. On the contrary, he held his ground and appeared to be willing to do what he could as a house-guest toward entertaining the callers.

Since the evening was fine, they all sat out on the porch, and Stillwell, who had evidently been primed for the occasion by his daughter, led Griffith to talk of his experience overseas, which he did with something less than the restraint peculiar to most of the returned soldiers.

LATER, when Kingsley had taken Stillwell round to the house garage to show him a new shock-absorber—his own invention—which he was trying out on the roadster, Griffith and the young woman were left alone for the moment. Griffith did not give his companion a chance to begin.

"You shouldn't have come," he said shortly. "All Bethsaida will be yammering about it to-morrow. Don't you know that I'm a jailbird and a more than suspected criminal?"

"I know what John could tell me, but not any more," she returned.

"Isn't that enough?"

"No. You were not the one who shot Jacob Southwick."

"You don't know anything about it," he asserted, with gruffness still to the fore. "I'm not the Arch Griffith you used to know and play with. Get that straight."

"You mean that you want me to think the worst of you?"

"Whatever you think will come short of the fact."

"I wish you wouldn't try so hard to push me away, Archer. I haven't done anything to deserve it."

She was leaning against one of the porch pillars, and he got up to stand before her.

"Are you blind, Margie—or don't you want to see?" he flamed out.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Then I'll tell you. Away back yonder, in the other years, when you were only a little girl, I—I learned to worship you. Oh, I know what you'll say—what you'll think; but it's so. I dreamed of going away after I should grow up—going away and making good and coming back to marry you. If I did go at the last, without telling you the boy's dream, it was only because I realized that you were still only a child—that you were not awake—and I wanted the full-grown love of a woman. Then the war came, and I had to go."

He stopped abruptly and turned away. After a moment she said very softly:

"Yes; I know. The war came and you had to go. What then?"

"It was while we were preparing to embark that I heard you were to marry John, and then I knew I had waited too long. Why haven't you married him?"

It was her turn to look away.

"I don't know, Archer. He—he has been very faithful—and patient."

"Don't you love him?"

"I—don't know."

He took a short turn to the end of the porch. When he came back he began again:

"I didn't mean to come to Bethsaida; I think you must know that. I'd made a horrible, hopeless mess of my life—of everything. You thought, the night I walked home with you, that I was posing. I wasn't. The worst you've ever heard of me is true, and then some. I ought to have climbed the next train and got away. I meant to do that after I had given this self-righteous old town a gasp or two for pure deviltry's sake. I didn't expect to find you or John; somehow I had got the impression that the Star works had been sold and that John had gone to Cleveland. And I supposed, of course, that you and he were married."

"Yes?" she prompted. "And then?"

"Then I saw you. It was after John had paid my fine and brought me here—one evening when you had been to the house next door. I made John believe that I didn't recognize you. I knew then that I had my cue to vanish——"

"Still, you didn't."

"No. John told me something that same evening that trigged the wheels—temporarily. And now I can't go until this Southwick business is cleared up."

The two who had gone to inspect the new shock-absorber had returned and were coming up the steps.

"No, Uncle Judson; don't you worry about me getting rich out of a patent," Kingsley was saying, with a laugh. "I'm the son of an inventor, and I know."

"Time for us to be going, Margie girl," said the long-distance farmer, who still kept laborer's hours. And after a little more talk the two callers went home.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

This was on Tuesday evening. Griffith spent Wednesday forenoon with the old books in the library, but after luncheon he rode down to the Star works in the car with Kingsley. For a time he idled in the office, looking at the pictures in machinery catalogues while Kingsley worked at his desk. Later, he went on a rambling tour of the shops, lingering longest at the tool-room, where he leaned on the shelfed half-door, talking with Ted Rawlins, the boy who gave out the small tools as they were called for by the workmen. In such aimless manner the afternoon was worn out, and at quitting-time he rode home with Kingsley, had dinner, smoked the customary series of pipes with his host on the porch and went early to bed.

IT WAS some time after midnight that John Kingsley, whose money worry was making him a light sleeper, was wakened by a noise in the lower hall. As the noise was not repeated, he turned over and went to sleep again, denying the impulse that was urging him to get up and investigate. If the impulse had not been denied, if he had gone out to look over the balustrade in the upper hall, the light of a waning moon, filtering dimly through the fanlight over the old-fashioned door, would have shown him the figure of a man crouching at the stair-foot—crouching, waiting and listening.

In a short time, when it became reasonably certain that the clatter of the dropped shoe was not going to bring consequences, the crouching figure rose and crept to the door to let itself out upon the porch. It was Griffith, and once safely in the open, with the door closed softly behind him, he sat in one of the porch chairs to put on and lace his shoes. A few minutes afterward he had latched the front gate behind him as softly as he had latched the door, and was making his way swiftly down the avenue, keeping in the shadows cast by the bordering trees.

If he were anxious to avoid being seen, as his actions seemed to indicate, fortune favored him. Peter Glavin, one of the two recently commissioned night constables, was standing on the bank corner, but Griffith evidently saw him a block away and made a dodging détour to come back into the avenue at the point where it crossed the railroad tracks. Past the crossing there was less danger of detection, and he went on at a quick walk, halting only when he reached the Star works, or, rather, at the corner of the high factory-fence enclosure.

The pause at the fence corner was only momentary, and was apparently made for the purpose of determining the whereabouts in the plant of the night watchman. Within a minute or two the man came in sight, crossing from the machine-shop to the foundry, the yellow spot of his lantern making swinging-pendulum arcs in the shadow as he strode along. When the light disappeared in the foundry building, the watcher at the fence corner ran quickly to the small office extension fronting upon the street. With the deftness of a skilled housebreaker he slipped a thin bit of steel between the sashes of one of the windows opening upon the sidewalk; the fastening snapped aside and the sash went up. Glancing up and down the street, as if to make sure that it was still deserted, he ducked through the open window and gently closed the sash.

Once inside, he seemed to know precisely what he wanted to do. From an unlocked drawer in Kingsley's desk he took an electric torch and, winking it rapidly, made his way among the racks of material in the stock-room at the rear of the office, and so on into the machine-shop. This being a fairly modern factory-building, with wide areas of glass in its walls, the gibbous moon gave light enough for the swift dash between the long rows of silent machines, a flight which paused at the tool-room. Here there was no need for any housebreaking measures. The upper part of the half-door was on the latch, and he opened it and swung himself in over the shelved lower half.

Closing the upper half of the door so that the torch's tiny glow should not be seen from the main room, he began a hurried search in the tool-shelves and racks, darting the beam of the little lamp here and there, and making his selections readily, as if the raid had been carefully planned. Certain small objects that clicked as he dropped them into his pockets were taken from the various shelves, and from one of the larger racks he lifted a heavy little machine with handles and a body the size and shape of a small melon. This he wrapped in the tool-boy's overalls, making a carrying bundle of it with loopings of heavy twine.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

With a final sweep of the flicking beam of light over the racks and shelves he was ready to go. Opening the half-door he looked out into the moonlit shop. Through the windows at the far end, the yellow dot of the watchman's lantern could be seen—the man was returning from the foundry. Griffith climbed nimbly over the lower half of the door, paused long enough to close and latch the upper half, leaving it as he had found it, and ran with his melon-shaped burden, reaching the shelter of the stock-room extension of the office-building a breathless moment before the watchman's lantern appeared at the farther end of the machine-shop.

Snapping the switch of the flash-lamp again, the fugitive quickly picked his way through to the office. Replacing the electric torch in the desk drawer from which he had taken it, he raised the sash of the window through which he had gained entrance and looked out. The midnight quiet of the street was still undisturbed, but now the heavy tread of the night watchman could be heard as the man came through the adjoining stock-room. As unhurriedly as if no danger threatened, the burglarizing intruder set his overalls-wrapped burden out upon the sidewalk and followed it. A few seconds later he had noiselessly lowered the sash, had flicked the fastening back into place with the thin bit of steel used in opening it, and was on his way across the railroad tracks with the carefully shrouded metal melon under his arm.

"DID you hear any noise in the night, Archer?"

The question was Kingsley's. Aunt Mandy, fat, bare-armed, and wearing the bandanna turban of the old-time house servant, had brought in the ham and eggs and hot waffles and had poured the breakfast coffee. Griffith looked up, steady-eyed, and his answer was evasive only in the form it took.

"One of the things you learn in hoboing is to sleep when you can and to make a good job of it while you're at it. Did you have a nightmare?"

"No; but I did hear a noise—or thought I did. Sounded as if somebody had fallen over a chair."

"Don't miss anything this morning; do you?"

"Haven't missed anything yet."

"Imagination," said Griffith. "You can hear a clock ticking between waking and sleeping and fancy it's a riveting-hammer. Everybody has had that experience."

Kingsley went on eating in silence for a few minutes, but apparently without appetite. Finally he said,

"Remember any of your schoolboy Latin, Arch?"

"A little. What, in particular?"

"I woke up his morning with the old Roman gladiators' *vale* chasing itself around in the vacant brain-cells: '*Morituri te salutamus.*' To-morrow is the fatal day for me."

"Any new developments?"

"Plenty of them, and all to the bad. I've pulled just about all the strings—Chicago, Cleveland, Indianapolis. No good. I can't twist out of the hell-box I walked into when I let old Amos hypnotize me a month ago. Larkin gave me another whisper yesterday. He is as deep in Whittlesea's confidence as anybody is—which isn't saying much—and he tells me that old Amos has always had his eye on the Star works, not only for the profit there might be in ownership but also because the ownership would give him a lead-pipe cinch upon every man in the plant who is trying to buy a home. Larkin says that Whittlesea was continually trying to get a claw-hold during my father's lifetime. But dad had more sense than I have."

"Has Whittlesea notified you that he expects you to lift your paper to-morrow?" Griffith asked.

"Not personally—no. I had the usual notice from the bank ten days ago."

"Are you going to see him about it to-day?"

"I have one more threadbare hope. My major in the artillery was, before the war, and is now, after it, the financial head of a steel company from which we've been buying material for years. In the middle of the boom year he warned me to go slow, telling me, at the same time, to let him know if the shrinkage—which he prophesied was sure to come—caught me with the bars down. I've written him a plain statement of my fool break, asking him to wire his reply. I ought to hear from him to-day."

Griffith looked up quickly.

"He doesn't happen to be with Midland Steel; does he?"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

An instant later he had leaped afoot and was reaching for the snap-switch of the hanging electric light. But the woman had seen him.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"He is. Why?"

"The Midland is in trouble. Its Cleveland plant was shut down day before yesterday. I happened to see the news-item in the *Telegraph*."

Kingsley pushed his chair away from the breakfast-table and got up wearily.

"I guess that settles it," he said. And Griffith was left to finish his breakfast alone.

THAT day the derelict's proceedings were even more mysterious than those of the night. After he had washed down the last of Aunt Mandy's toothsome waffles with a second cup of coffee, he slipped an unused tablespoon into his pocket, went to the library, drew the window-shades and, making himself comfortable in the easiest of the lounging-chairs, composed himself for a nap. The old colored woman, peeping in cautiously twice during the forenoon, found him still sleeping peacefully in the big chair; but between ten and eleven o'clock he appeared in the kitchen to say that he wouldn't be home for luncheon and to ask if he might have a bite put up for him in a newspaper.

With the paper-wrapped package of sandwiches under his arm, he went up-stairs to his room, passing therefrom to the bathroom beyond. Here he took a small rubber hot-water bottle from its hook over the bathtub, rolled it into a tight cylinder, which he tied with a bit of twine, and put it into his pocket. Leaving the house, he went round to the garage, which served the double purpose of a shelter for Kingsley's car and a storeroom for Uncle Ephraim's garden-tools. Here he rummaged until he found a small "agatized" iron water-bucket and the garden-syringe which the old man used for spraying his roses. Satisfying himself that the syringe was in working-order, he rummaged again, this time among Kingsley's automobile supplies, and the search was presently rewarded by the finding of a bit of rubber tubing a few inches long. This he fitted over the nozzle of the syringe; after which he cut a slit in the lining of his coat, and thus made a pocket deep enough to contain and conceal the syringe and its elongated nozzle.

A little later the old colored cook saw him leaving the yard, not by the front gate but through the garden and out at the back, to lose himself among the trees of a wooded hill which rose abruptly from the alley serving the few houses in the cross-street—saw him and wondered what he was going to do with the bucket he was carrying..

Having climbed the wooded hill and descended its farther slope, Griffith paused as if taking his bearings, and then struck out across-country, climbing fences and passing through farm-fields with no regard for roads or beaten paths save to avoid them. After an hour's walk he came into a region where there were more wooded hills and no farms, where the hillsides were marked with outcroppings of sandstone ledges, and a few minutes more of the brisk walking brought him to the edge of a vast pit quarried deep in the sandstone, its interior cobwebbed with the wire guy-cables of a pair of huge derricks.

It was the noon-hour in the great quarry, and the men were scattered about in small groups, eating their midday meal. Griffith showed himself only for a moment on the sky-line formed by the pit-brink. Withdrawing a step or two and shading his eyes from the glare of the sun, he passed the surrounding hillsides in review, as if searching for something as yet unrevealed. In a little time he found what he was looking for—a small boxlike, windowless structure standing well back from the opposite pit-edge and half hidden in a growth of young trees. Fifteen minutes later he had circled the quarry-pit and was cautiously stalking the sheet-iron-covered hut from its rear.

Though the front of the hut could be seen from some parts of the quarry floor where the men were eating, he did not hesitate. The iron-covered door was fastened with a hasped padlock, but a quick pry with a small steel bar which he drew from his pocket loosened the staple. Dodging into the dark interior, he pulled the door partly shut behind him. His object, whatever it was, was quickly accomplished, and, dodging out, he thrust the pulled staple into place and darted quickly into the wood behind the hut.

A few minutes' fast walking brought him to a secluded glen among the hills with a trickling stream running through it. With three stones taken from the stream-bed he made a rude fireplace in which he quickly built a fire of twigs and dead wood. Filling the bucket with water from the brook, he set it upon the three stones to heat. Next he unwrapped his sandwiches, laid them

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

aside and spread the newspaper wrapping wide upon the grass before him. Then he took from his pockets a number of yellow, paper-encased cylinders, with sawdust adhering to their oily outer surfaces. Breaking the wrappers, he crumbled the clay-colored contents of the cylinders upon the spread newspaper, rubbing the crumblings fine between the palms of his hands.

These preparations completed, he washed his hands in the brook and sat with his back to a tree to eat his luncheon, feeding the tiny fire at intervals and testing the water in the bucket with a finger to determine its heat. With a fire so small, the water-heating was a slow process, and he had time to fill and smoke a pipe before the silvery bubbles of steam forming on the bottom of the bucket began to rise to the surface and burst.

This appeared to be the signal for which he was waiting. Carefully lifting the spread newspaper, he slid the little pile of clay-colored crumblings into the hot water. After five or ten minutes he took the bucket from its rock tripod, set it aside as tenderly as if it were made of the thinnest and brittlest of glass and extinguished the fire. Next he gently stirred the hot mixture in the bucket with a twig, skimming off the oily scum that rose to the surface with the spoon he had taken from the breakfast-table, and coughing and choking a little as he inhaled the fumes rising from the steaming brew.

After a few minutes of the stirring and skimming he took from his pocket the rubber water-bag, and from his coat lining the garden-syringe. The reason for the elongated nozzle became obvious when he began to use the syringe; he was sucking up whatever heavier liquid it was that had settled to the bottom of the heated mixture and decanting it with the most meticulous care into the rubber bag.

This concluding part of the process completed, he emptied the bucket into the brook, cleansed it carefully, restored the syringe to its hiding-place in his coat, and, stoppering the rubber bag securely, tied it round his neck with a string, letting it hang down in front so that he could button his waistcoat over it. That done, he picked up the empty bucket and turned his face toward Bethsaida, walking more slowly now, but avoiding the roads and inhabited areas quite as painstakingly as he had done on the outward tramping, and pausing now and again to put a hand to his forehead as if the fumes from the bucket decoction had given him a splitting headache.

Reaching town and the house at the head of Maple Avenue a little after two o'clock, he went first to the garage to return his borrowings, and afterward to his room, from which, a little later, he descended to the library and settled himself with one of the early-Victorian novels, taking his ease, pipe in mouth, as one whose day's work has been satisfactorily concluded. And it was thus that Kingsley found him at the early dinner-hour in the evening—found him and forgot his own troubles long enough to be glad that the derelict was still apparently doing nothing to prejudice his cause during the interval of waiting for the result of the grand-jury inquiry into the Southwick matter.

IT WAS at the dinner-table, just after Griffith had contrived, unnoticed, to slip the borrowed spoon from his pocket, that Kingsley completed the unloading process begun at breakfast.

"All in, down and out, Arch," he said gloomily. "Your guess on Midland Steel was right. Chambers wires me that he is in a tight place personally, as well as in his company holdings. On top of that I've seen Whittlesea. To-morrow winds me up, I tried him every way—offered to return the unspent balance of the borrow, which is still on deposit in my checking-account. To do this meant shutting the plant down at once, of course, and he wouldn't listen to that—said if the plant were closed the men would be out of work and he wouldn't get the payments on the house-mortgages he is holding."

"Naturally," Griffith agreed. "Anything else?"

"Yes. Then he rubbed it in—said he'd need a man to boss the plant, and offered me the job at a salary that was a flat insult. I told him the amount was less than some of my men were earning, and he snapped out something to the effect that they wouldn't be making so much after he took hold. There are no two ways about it, Archer—that old sinner hasn't a drop of human blood in his veins. He is all vampire. Think of it! For more years than either of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

us can remember he has been sweating the life out of everybody he has touched. And what good does it do him? He lives like a hermit in those three rooms over the bank—like a dog, people say who have seen his rooms—and he hasn't a chick or a child or a relative, so far as anybody knows, to leave his money to when he dies."

"All of which doesn't help you out any," Griffith remarked coolly. Then, quite as casually, "What would you do, John, if you had your stock back?"

"I'd do what I should have done in the first place—wear out the railroad tracks in all directions until I found an honest banker who would back me without skinning me alive. I've learned a lot about finances in the last thirty days. The banks have plenty of money. I could have gone to Cleveland or Indianapolis and borrowed any amount on my stock up to seventy or seventy-five per cent. of its par value. That is what makes it so hard to bear. I was such a horribly short-sighted fool!"

"Which simply means that you are a better engineer than a business man, as your father was before you. And, considering the way business is conducted nowadays, that is rather to your credit than otherwise."

"It has spelled ruin just the same—and not only for me but for a lot of men who have trusted me and bet on me. No employer has ever had finer loyalty shown him than I have, Archer. When the pinch came a month or so ago the men in the shops sent a committee to me to say that they would voluntarily take a reduction in pay if that would help me to keep the plant going. And to think that I've got to turn men of that sort over to the tender mercies of an old Shylock who will grind them to the bone!"

Griffith's lips were twisted in a smile that was little more than a grimace.

"Let me offer you the first article of the hobo's creed by way of a sop to throw to the three-headed dog that's biting you," he said. "It's this: 'Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.' Let to-morrow take care of itself; it will be here soon enough."

"All right." Kingsley nodded. "We'll talk about something else. Did you know there was another burglary last night?"

"Ah, the noise? So you've missed something?"

"No; not here—at the plant."

"But you have a watchman there; haven't you?"

"Yes; but he evidently let something get by."

"Much loss?"

"No. That's the odd thing about it—an electric hand-drill, a few small tools from the tool-room, and the tool-boy's overalls. That is the foreman's report, but there may be a mistake. Perhaps the boy let the tools go out without making a record of them. But he is quite positive that he didn't."

"Any burglarious traces?"

"Not a sign. I suppose a man might have climbed the fence, and if he did that everything would be open to him. But the watchman spends most of his time between the hourly rounds tinkering for himself in the machine-shop, and the tool-room, as you may have noticed, is right in the center of the shop."

"An electric drill, you say?" Griffith remarked. "That looks a bit suspicious; doesn't it? A drill is a tool a burglar could use to pretty good advantage, I should say. Have you notified the authorities?"

"No. It was such a small loss; and we haven't any real evidence that the tools were stolen. They're just missing."

"All the same, I believe I'd notify Maitland if I were you. You can do it as you drive down in the morning."

AS KINGSLEY recalled it afterward, this was all that was said about the losses from the plant tool-room. After they had shifted from the dining-room to the porch and the pipes were lit, Griffith did most of the talking, as the ironmaster remembered, digging deeply into the college-period reminiscences and finally surprising him by saying,

"You didn't know, when I took the job in the West after our graduation, that I meant to come back some day and marry Margie Stillwell; did you, John?"

"You?" Kingsley gasped.

"Yes; even so. It's to laugh; isn't it?"

"No; I can't laugh at it; it is too——"

"Too near a tragedy, you'd say. Never mind. She's going to marry a better man than I ever was, even at my best."

Kingsley was silent for the space of five minutes or more. When he spoke again it was to say gravely,

"I hope she will some day marry a better man than either of us, Archer."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"You needn't make it so diffuse and indefinite."

Kingsley waved the inference aside.

"After to-morrow I shall have nothing to offer her—or any woman. Not that poverty or riches would make any difference to Margery; she's too fine for that. But I can't reach her heart, Archer. After so long a time she has convinced me of one thing, and that is that I'm not the chosen man."

"But there isn't any other man."

"Isn't there?" Maybe not; though I'm not so certain of that as I used to be."

Griffith got up and emptied his pipe over the porch railing.

"I'm going to bed," he announced, "and if you'll take a fool's advice, you'll do the same—go to bed and make up your mind to sleep the sleep of the just and the innocent. You'll say you can't, with to-morrow in prospect, and I'll say, in rebuttal, that to-morrow isn't here yet, and nobody ever knows what a new day may bring forth. Good night; I'm gone."

IT WAS a little past one o'clock and a summer storm was threatening when William Barclay, one of Bethsaida's newly starred night constables, finished his midnight round in the upper part of town and trudged heavily down past the Baptist church to the bank corner, where his beat dovetailed with that of his colleague, Peter Glavin. By timing themselves judiciously, the two usually contrived to meet at the bank corner. It was weary work tramping the deserted streets through the small hours on the watch for something they never found, and the Third Street meeting from hour to hour served as a welcome break in the monotonies. Glavin was standing in front of the bank, twirling his night-stick in fancied imitation of a metropolitan roundsman, when Barclay came up.

"How about it, Billy—anything stirrin'?" he inquired, speaking out of the corner of his mouth, as behooved a member of the delitescent profession.

"Nothin' up along—quiet as the graveyard," said Barclay, with a yawn. "Got any smokin'?"

Glavin passed his tobacco-sack, and Barclay filled a corn-cob pipe and struck a match.

"What you think about Arch Griffith?" he asked.

"I think what the whole town's thinkin'—that it's flyin' in the face o' Providence to let him loose on bail."

"Oh, I dunno," said Barclay. "I guess he won't make no more bad breaks, not while that Southwick job's a-hangin' fire for the grand jury. That boy ain't no durn fool, Pete, whatever else he may be."

"No; I guess not. Reckon we're goin' to have a shower?"

"Looks mighty like it. B'lieve I'll go by the house and get my rain-coat on this next round, and you better do the same. No use takin' a chance o' catchin' cold for three dollars and a half a night."

Getting a whiff from Barclay's pipe, Glavin was moved to fill and light his own, and the two guardians of the town's peace stood for a few minutes with their backs to the corner window of the bank, smoking companionably. In the room behind them a single electric bulb hanging over the vault door lighted the working-space beyond the wire cages. Not having eyes in the back part of their heads, they could not be expected to observe that the interior of the bank had suffered a change from the ordinary. Where the counter fittings and the wire cages made an angle, the entire face of the vault door should have been in sight from the Maple Avenue sidewalk. But for some reason it was not. Only the upper third of the door was visible under the hanging electric bulb. But this was too slight a change to be marked by such amateur plain-clothesmen as the two middle-aged citizens smoking in comradely silence before the gold-lettered window.

It was not until after they had rapped their pipes out and moved away, each in his own direction, that a man, kneeling in front of the vault door behind the dust-cloth screen he had thoughtfully hung up to cut off the view from the front, went on with his job. Taking up a little melon-shaped machine connected to one of the near-by desk-outlets by an electric cord, he resumed the drilling operation which had been interrupted by the approach of the two roundsmen. Parsimonious, even in the matter of guarding his treasures, Amos Whittlesea had bought cheaply in the construction of the new vault and had got what he paid for—a door which was by no means proof against the gnawings of a tempered steel drill, and in a short time the drill went

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

through the outer plating of the door and on into some cementlike filling beyond. The existence of this filling seemed to be the thing the burglar wished to demonstrate by the drilling. He picked up some of the cuttings and rubbed them between a finger and thumb, as if to satisfy himself of the nature of the material.

With a wordless exclamation which might have been an expression of contempt for a banker who knew, or should know, that a cheap steel door with cement filling was a crude anachronism in a day when safe-blowing had been developed into an exact science, the burglar laid the investigative drill aside and, ignoring the test-hole he had made, drew a bar of laundry-soap from his pocket and, with a broken table-knife for a tool, quickly and deftly puttied up the joint-crack round the door—all this in silence broken only by the distant muttering of thunder presaging the approach of the threatened summer storm. At the top of the door, which he reached by standing upon a chair, he left an inch of the crack unfilled, and round the inch he built up a little cup of the soap like a funnel. Into this funnel, from a baglike thing which he took from beneath his coat, he poured a small quantity of liquid, enough to fill the soap-cup. When the liquid had seeped away into the door-crack, he affixed a short piece of fuse with a detonating-cap, sticking it in place by closing the soap-cup round it.

While he was putting these finishing touches to the job, another interruption came. This time it was an automobile driven at speed and coming up the cross-street from the direction of the railroad station. The robber crouched and waited. The car turned the corner into the avenue, and the drumming of the motor died down to a murmurous drone. For a few seconds the crouching man seemed not to realize that the continuous murmur meant that the car had stopped. But an instant later he had leaped afoot and was reaching for the snap-switch of the hanging electric light.

He was not quite quick enough. As he sprang for the switch, the side door, which had been left ajar, swung open noiselessly and the figure of a woman stood framed in the doorway. At the same instant his fingers reached the switch and he snapped the light off and stepped behind the projecting corner of the vault. But he knew well enough that the precaution had been taken too late. The woman had seen him.

FOR some little time after the renewed roar of the auto's motor had told him that he was no longer spied upon, he continued to crouch in the darkness behind the corner of the vault. When at last he ventured to switch the light on and resume his work, the thunder was growing louder and the lightning flashes were coming in swift succession. But there were no more interruptions.

When all was in readiness he stepped out through the side door—the door which the woman had left standing open—and looked up and down the cross-street. Not satisfied with this, he went to the corner and looked in both directions in the avenue. Diagonally across the wider street and half a square distant, the front of the St. Nicholas Hotel was picked out by a single cluster of lights switched on in the office lobby; but apart from this there were no signs of wakefulness or life.

As he stood on the corner a sharp flash of lightning dimmed the street electrics and the thunder muttered in rolling echoes. It was a propitious moment and he did not waste it. Retracing his steps swiftly and reentering the bank, he struck a match, lit the short fuse and darted out of the building, leaving the door open to relieve the sudden gas-pressure of the explosion which might otherwise crash the glass of the big front windows and increase the danger of an alarm.

He had hardly reached the shelter of a doorway on the opposite side of the cross-street when the explosion came—a muffled, jarring blast, chiming in so evenly with the rumbling thunder of the storm as to be almost indistinguishable. Motionless in the shadow of the sheltering doorway, the safe-blower waited. If an alarm had been given, the results would soon be manifest. But the only stir was elemental. The precursor blast of the storm was sweeping through the streets, and a gusty shower of rain-drops pattered upon the surrounding roofs.

It was not until he was about to recross the street that the safe-blower saw two men, dim figures in the blur of the rain, creep out of the shadows of the narrow alley behind

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

the bank-building. The natural inference was that they had heard the noise of the explosion and were on their way to investigate, and this was the inference the watcher across the street seemed to draw. Gripping the short steel pry-bar with which he had been prepared to break the lock of the bank door if his skeleton key had failed to work, he made ready to defend his "plant." If the two men should come as far as the open door——

Singularly enough, they stopped short of the telltale door, ducking out of sight in the rear hallway from which the stair led to the second story of the building—to the rooms above where Amos Whittlesea ate and slept. The watching burglar made a gesture with the steel bar which might have meant that this intrusion upon the old miser-banker's privacy was nothing to him, and ran across to reenter the bank. One look assured him that the explosive had done its work thoroughly. The vault door was blown open and hung sagging by one hinge.

Quickly coupling one of the desk lamps to an extension cord, he entered the vault. The inner cash-safe was intact, but he hardly gave it a glance. The pigeonholes at the back were what drew him, and in an incredibly short space of time he had rifled them, dropping some of the hastily examined contents upon the vault floor and thrusting others into his pockets. So swiftly did he work that not more than five minutes had elapsed before he was leaving the bank, closing the side door as he went out, and running quickly to lose himself in the shadow of the buildings across the street.

BY THIS time the storm had broken in full force, and with the rain pouring in torrents it might be assumed that even an escaping burglar would take cover for the few minutes that a summer night's thundershower might last. But this particular burglar seemed not to realize that he was getting soaked to the skin, or perhaps he remembered that the rain which would be driving every other night wanderer to shelter was his best protection. At all events, he ran straight down the avenue and across the railroad tracks, halting only when he reached the office of the Star Foundry and Machine Works.

Here his work was as swiftly and deftly skilful as it had been in the bank. A moment's manipulation snapped the catch of one of the street-facing windows. The sash went up and a ducking leap carried him inside. Closing the window and drawing the shades, he groped for Kingsley's desk, found it and took something from one of the unlocked drawers. In a twinkling he was kneeling before Kingsley's small office safe, and with the beam from an electric torch to show him the figures on the dial, was hurriedly working the combination.

There was shrewd need for haste. As the last tumbler of the combination was twirled into place and the bolts were shot, heavy footfalls on a plank floor could be heard above the swish and slur of the rain, and a dancing ray of light, appearing and disappearing on the glass upper half of the door opening into the stock-room at the back, told of a lantern in the hands of some one approaching the office—a warning that the watchman was making his regular round. In a series of lightninglike movements that seemed to synchronize themselves evenly with the approaching footsteps, the robber opened the safe, thrust a stuffed envelope into one of the pigeonholes, closed the door, shot the bolts and twirled the knob of the combination. Ten seconds later he had returned the electric torch to its place in the desk drawer, had readjusted the window-shades, raised the sash by which he had obtained ingress and was stepping through the opened window to safety and another drenching. But even now, with the dancing ray of lantern-light on the glass door at the rear falling at an angle to show that the watchman must be fairly at the threshold, the sodden figure in the rain paused long enough to close the sash and snap its fastening into place before he ran to disappear in the scudding spume of the downpour on the railroad crossing.

By the time he had gone a block beyond the crossing the rain was coming with less violence, though the street-gutters were still running full to the curb. At a corner where there was a sewer-grating, he stopped and emptied his pockets of sundry tools, drills, files, a small coil of blasting-fuse, a handful of dynamite-caps, a saw for cutting metal and the short steel bar which had served as a jimmy, dropping them all into the swirling whirlpool going down into the sewer.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Lastly he took the rubber hot-water bag from beneath his coat and crowded it down between the bars of the sewer-grating.

This disburdening accomplished, he went on his way up-town, swinging along in his wet clothing, and no longer dodging or trying to keep out of sight. On the corner opposite the Security Bank he stood for a moment looking across at the scene of his late activities. The rain had dwindled to a gentle drizzle; the wind had died down and the clouds were breaking overhead. So far as outward appearances indicated, the vault-blowing job was as yet undiscovered. The bank corner was deserted, with the single vault-light dimly outlining the windows and, still more dimly, the fixtures and furnishings within.

The robber thrust his hands into his wet coat pockets and started on up the avenue. As he was stepping across the miniature torrent in the gutter, a shrill, elfin scream, broken suddenly in the midst, rang out upon the small-hour silence. For an instant he paused, listening, and then went on doggedly across the side-street. But as he reached the opposite sidewalk the cry came again—a gurgling, half-muffled shriek for help. Half-reluctantly, as it seemed, the bank-robber wheeled and dog-trotted across the avenue, over to the bank corner and past it to the stair hallway in the rear, and up the stair to the second story. In the upper corridor he put his shoulder to a door under which a thin line of light was showing and burst it open.

THE scene in the bare bedroom to which the door gave access amply accounted for the shrill cries for succor. Two men, with handkerchief-masks over their faces, were struggling with a gray-bearded third man lying upon the iron bed. The gray-beard had his skinny arms locked through and round the rods of the iron headboard, and while one of his two assailants tried to break his hold and muffle his cries with a towel pressed upon his mouth, the other was holding a lighted match to the bare soles of a pair of corpselike feet thrust out from beneath the bedclothes. So much the vault-blower saw as the door gave way and let him in. Then the two masked men leaped up and hurled themselves upon him.

Possibly at no stage in the caveman struggle thus precipitated was the result at all uncertain. Though the masked pair fought as two to one, it became quickly evident that they fought only for a chance to escape. For a chaotic minute there was a fierce grapple in the bare, ill-lighted bedroom, a stamping of feet, the "crunch" of rib-cracking blows given and returned, and then the masked men tore themselves loose and ran. But at the door one of them turned. There was the flash and crash of a pistol-shot, a stuttering shriek from the bed, the "pad, pad" of running feet in the corridor and on the stair—and silence. And it was not until the silence had supervened that the victor in the struggle realized that he had no feeling in his right arm, and that the "tap, tap" that was punctuating the stillness was made by the blood dripping from his fingers upon the uncarpeted floor.

Perhaps it was characteristic of the qualities that make a cracksman's calling possible that enabled him to ignore his own hurt for the time being while he was ascertaining what had been done to the gray-haired, gray-bearded figure on the iron bed. It was as he feared. The bullet which had scored his arm had found a second target. Amos Whittlesea was gasping for breath, but he was still conscious.

"I knowed it was you," he panted. "They was killin' me—by inches—when you—broke in. Tryin' to make me—make me go down and work the—combination so's they—could get my money! But I—I wouldn't. I'd let 'em kill me first—and that's—that's what they've done!"

"Don't talk!" broke in the rescuer gruffly. "Let's see if there's anything to be done before I go for a doctor."

With his left hand he stripped the bedcovers and found the wound. It was an intercostal puncture; the bullet had apparently ranged upward and was still in the old man's body.

"Iodine?" questioned the succorer briefly.

The old man waved a shaking hand toward a shelf with bottles over the wash-hand-stand. The robber found the bottle of iodine, drew the cork with his teeth and applied a fair half of the contents to the wound in the old man's side. Then he struggled out of his wet coat, tore away the shirt sleeve, and drenched his own wound with the remaining half, after which he bandaged it clumsily with the towel that had been used for a gag. The old man's breath was

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

coming in rattling gasps, but he was still quite able to talk.

"Got you, too, did they?" he mumbled.

"Got me first. I'm going after Doc Grimshaw now. You lie still."

With his wet coat drawn over his shoulders, the vault-robber groped his way through the dark upper hall and down the unlighted stair. The rain had stopped, and there were only the mutterings of thunder in the distance and the wet pavements to tell of the storm which had so lately swept over the quiet country town. Neither the old man's cries nor the pistol-shot had served to give an alarm.

Staggering a little as he walked, the wounded bank-robber, now become a messenger of succor, hurried on, past the church on the corner above and up the avenue to a house three doors beyond the Stillwell cottage. His jamming of a thumb upon the bell-push was answered almost immediately by the gentle-voiced old physician who had been Bethsaida's ready help in time of trouble for many years.

"You, Archer?" he said, in mild surprise, and then, the flicked-on hall light showing him the loose coat and the bandaged arm: "You are hurt? Come in."

Griffith stepped inside and sat down on the hall seat. The benumbed arm was beginning to assert itself to the blotting out of the surroundings.

"I didn't come for myself," he contrived to say, and his own voice seemed to be only an echo of a voice calling from a vast distance. "It's—it's Amos Whittlesea. He's been shot—in his room over the bank. Better go quickly, Doctor, and any——"

"Heavens! Shot, you say? Did you shoot him, Archer?"

"No. I suppose I ought to have shot him, but I didn't. He—he'll tell you when you get there—if he isn't already past telling anything. You'd better hurry."

IN SPITE of his advanced years, the old physician was fully equal to the emergencies of his profession. Helping Griffith into the small operating-room and propping him in the old-fashioned contrivance which served indifferently and as occasion required for an easy chair and an operating-table, he hurried away, and Griffith set his teeth and tried to steel himself to endure the pain of the gashed arm. The interval of waiting was mercifully shortened for him by nature's own anodyne. When the pain in the lacerated arm grew too great to be borne, he lost consciousness, and when next he opened his eyes the lights were on in the tiny operating-room and the doctor was unbandaging the wounded arm.

"Back again, are you, Doc?" he said weakly. "How is the old man?"

"Pretty badly off," was the quiet rejoinder. "It will be a miracle if he lives—at his age."

"Did—did he tell you how it happened?"

"He certainly did. It's a thousand pities those two young scoundrels got away. They were torturing him by burning his feet."

"Yes," said Griffith; "I saw them. I had nothing but my bare hands, you know, and they were two to one."

"I suppose you didn't recognize them?"

"The room wasn't very well lighted, and they were masked," Griffith explained.

"Of course." The doctor had bared the wounded arm and was examining it. "Pretty savage flesh-wound, but there are no bones broken. You'll have to lie by and keep quiet for a while, but I guess that is the worst there is in store for you. I'll dress it and then get out the car and take you home. You're stopping with John Kingsley yet; aren't you?"

"Yes," said Griffith. Then: "You won't need to bother with the car. I can get home all right."

At this the dressing began, and once more Griffith had to set his teeth. But even this did not save him from slipping again into the deep pit of unconsciousness, and when he came to, the arm was bandaged and the kindly old doctor was applying restoratives.

"Got you; didn't it?" he said gently, and then: "You're not going to stir out of this house to-night, my boy. I have a spare bed up-stairs and I'll help you up to it. Come on and let us see if you can keep your feet for that distance."

And with the old doctor's help the wounded man slowly climbed the stair and got out of his wet clothes and went to bed, to fall asleep presently with a noise as the sound of many waters roaring in his ears.

This eventful night is followed by a great change in Griffith's fortunes. See the next instalment of "Mellowing Money" in October EVERYBODY'S—out September 15th.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Kennedy had been busy with some glass plates, without a word passing among us and pressing a different glass plate to each forehead.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Thicker Than Water

A Craig Kennedy Story

As a Sleuth of Fiction, Craig Kennedy Ranks with Sherlock Holmes in Popularity, and We're Glad to Have Him in Everybody's. This Is the First of a Series.

By Arthur B. Reeve

Illustration by Harold Anderson

"I KNOW you look askance at taking divorce cases, but that is not what I want of you, Mr. Kennedy. I am not fighting for myself, my honor, anything but the biggest thing in my life—little Beth Hartley. She *is* the child of Hamlin Hartley; she *is* his heir, and I want you to help me prove it. I want none of his money for myself, but I want my little girl to know that her mother did not bring her into the world in dishonor!"

In her fervor Hope Hartley, wife of the banker, Hamlin Hartley, had risen from her chair. It was not the entrancing bit of femininity that appealed to Kennedy. It was her eyes—eyes that would have stirred the world with their pathos. Wistful tears welled in them; then suddenly her mood changed. Determination and self-control were uppermost.

"If I were alone, Mr. Kennedy, I would not fight. If the man I love can do the things to me that Hamlin is doing, what would be the use of fighting—the use of anything? But my little girl must not be cheated of her name. No child of a Broadway butterfly like this Louise Lavender shall take it from her!"

Craig Kennedy gently forced her back in her chair, with a reassuring murmur.

"Louise Lavender," he repeated, turning to me. "That's that beauty-culturist found dead in her apartment over her shop on Fifty-eighth Street, Monday morning, is it not, Walter?"

"Yes"—I nodded—"that case I was telling you about. Mr. Hartley has made a statement that he was there until two in the morning, went up accompanied by his man Friday, his attorney, Canby, who says he left about midnight. Her maid found her dead in the morning—from an overdose of veronal, some sleeping-drug. It had been placed in a drink. That's what Dr. Leslie says, anyhow. There were signs of violence about. She had been robbed."

"Robbed? Robbed of what?"

"All her jewelry was gone; all her correspondence was gone; the letters of Hartley were gone."

Kennedy, at the mention of Leslie's name, had his hand on the telephone, but now he

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

hesitated and looked inquiringly at Hope.

"Yes!" she cried. "I suppose they'll say I started it all when I sued Hamlin for divorce and named Louise Lavender, said she had a child, a little boy, secretly known as 'Hamlin Hartley Lavender,' his child. But Hamlin retaliated with a suit against me, charged me with desertion, a lot of ridiculous things—that the baby, Beth Hartley, is in reality the child of Bert Halliwell, born after I left him, oh, nearly five years ago now."

"Why Bert Halliwell?" shot out Kennedy.

"Mr. Kennedy, from a little girl I have been interested in the stage. I have known most of the finest men and women in the profession, and when Hamlin and I separated about five years ago, I became an actress. From the stage I went into the movies. I've been rather successful. I've been told by my producer that he is going to star me in his next picture. I met Bert Halliwell when I first went on the stage. He was the star in the play in which I had a minor part. I often acted on his advice; he was always helping everybody. That is his nature. It was he suggested motion pictures. The last one I was in was 'Red Blood and Blue,' that starred him. The only thing that they have is that I know him—and now they tell me the police have put me on their list of suspects—suspect me of murdering my husband's mistress, I suppose." She spoke wearily. "It is the inevitable—but somehow, with Hamlin acting up this way, I don't care. But Beth's future—that's different. I'll fight!"

Mother love surged into the face that had only an instant before been listless.

The laboratory door opened and I recognized the heavy features of Abe Warsky, the picture-producer. But none of us was prepared for the slender, boyish Bert Halliwell, his star, who followed him in.

"You here, too?" Hope stammered.

Halliwell was evidently striving for a good line, but Warsky answered for him.

"We sure are! We just naturally gravitate to the best—only"—he laughed—"you landed first. My policy is best stars, best stories, best legal and detective advice."

Hope Hartley seemed troubled. She turned and laid an appealing hand on Craig's arm.

"Just for the little girl's sake, Mr. Kennedy," she murmured, "I ask you to give me a part of your time." She looked a bit tremulously in Halliwell's direction. "Please don't ask for it all, Bert."

"Don't worry, Hope. I wanted to see you, anyway. We both seem to be in bad. Lord knows why. Are you doing anything this afternoon?" She shook her head and colored slightly. Halliwell lowered his voice. "You know, Hope, what you asked me to find out—about that boy up at the beauty-shop of Mademoiselle Louise? Well, he is now with her mother, Mrs. Lafferty. She's come down to arrange things about her daughter's funeral and all that, staying with her son, a chauffeur, John Lafferty, on the corner of Lexington Avenue and Sixty-ninth Street. I know her well. When I tell her, I feel quite sure she'll help me. I want to take you round there."

At first Hope hesitated.

"But, Bert, I can't go. She'd be antagonized. Some other way——"

"No, no!" he insisted. "It will be quite all right."

"Well then—after lunch—same place."

Warsky turned. Hope was coloring even more deeply. Halliwell was again embarrassed, but said nothing. Hope was gone with a quick good-by to us and a whispered final word to Kennedy.

WARSKY looked chidingly at Halliwell. He turned to Kennedy.

"With Bert dragged into this Hartley divorce, and now this Louise Lavender murder, Kennedy, my picture isn't worth a plugged nickel. You know the state of the public mind. Clear Halliwell—I'll make it worth your while—twenty-five per cent. of the picture if you clear him. There!"

Craig had his hand again on the telephone.

"Mrs. Hartley worked in your picture," he reflected, looking at Warsky.

"Yes. When we were making 'Red Blood and Blue,' which we're just finishing, she wanted to play in it. It's a story of society life. We thought it was a good idea, would give the picture selling value to let her.

"That's one of the pictures Hartley refers to in his complaint," I put in, digging back into a pile of last week's papers. "Here! He says he was at a lawn-party when, 'passing behind some foliage, I heard the cattish remark of one woman to another. "How the little thing looks like her father, too!" I was in doubt, at first. But I soon found

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

out what the gossip was. It was of my wife, the baby and Bert Halliwell.' "

Halliwell now spoke up.

"That's when my wife, Lucy Lovett—the dancer, you know—began to sit up and take notice. Lucy's a lady of temper—and temperament—and temperature. She consulted her attorneys the moment my name came into the Hartley case. Then came this murder. The newspapers dug up a story of my intimacy with Louise Lavender. Exhibit Two. Then Lucy sued——"

"Well, what's your story?" asked Craig, with a smile.

"This Lavender girl and I were what you might call 'mud-pie sweethearts' back home. She came to the city, got into the butterfly life. Her mother wrote me to look Louise up. I did—tried to reform her——"

"And, you know," interrupted Warsky, "the first thing a man does, they say, when he tries to reform a girl. Well—confound it!—that's more gossip."

Kennedy had remained with one hand on the telephone-receiver, while in the other he had a pencil with which he was absently scrawling the formula for veronal on a pad by the instrument. Now he took off the receiver, called the district-attorney's office and asked for our friend Dr. Leslie, medical adviser.

There was a wait. Halliwell looked about the laboratory. Craig had spectroscopes, microscopes and X-ray machines, each fitted for a special purpose such as examining blood spots, forged documents, counterfeit money, powder-burned clothes and the thousand and one things that are picked up on a criminal trail. Warsky looked about, as if at a motion-picture set.

"I suppose you know that the chemist in recent years has become the most reliable detective in America," said Craig, waiting. "My chemico-legal warfare on crime has begun to make an impression. There has been very great progress made in the detection of crime during the last six or eight years, particularly through the application of chemistry and photography and the other sciences— Oh, hello, Leslie!"

The conversation was brief.

"Then you'll meet me at her apartment, right away?" concluded Kennedy. "Bring along a copy of that statement his lawyer gave the d. a., too." He turned to us. "They're saying Hartley has apparently cleared himself by his story to the district attorney. Maybe he has. But, really, I gather that the police haven't eliminated anybody yet." Halliwell shot a quick glance at Craig and looked away. "Not so much for either side will I play Professor Fixit," pursued Craig. "This is a bitter divorce suit. But I always think of the child first—the certainly innocent victim. In this case, if she is your child, Halliwell, it is just another unfortunate illegitimate. If she is the daughter of the banker, she is heir to millions——"

"But, Kennedy," Halliwell hastily put in, "it's preposterous——"

Craig silenced him.

"I would like to say," he said, "that the first endeavor of science is to help protect innocence and prevent the miscarriage of justice."

Outside, Halliwell excused himself, but Warsky insisted on sticking along, and Kennedy did not discourage him.

WE MET Leslie in the Fifty-eighth Street apartment. Already we were familiar with the details of the finding of that bruised and drugged form of the beautiful beauty-culturist. Her negro maid had come in the morning to give the usual attentions to the attractive little Broadway butterfly. There she had found her dead, amid the luxuries she loved, stretched across her bed.

The body, of course, had been removed. But the police had kept things much better than they used to do. Craig made a minute, if quick, examination. I found him at last down on his knees before the glass door of a mahogany cabinet.

"Finger-prints?" I asked.

He shook his head.

"That's all been messed up long ago. No." He was examining an oval smudge on the glass of the cabinet.

"That's where Louise kept her jewel-case, sir," remarked the officer on guard.

Kennedy nodded.

"What of the drug, Doctor?" he asked Leslie. "Veronal?" Leslie nodded. "You have blood samples I could study?"

"Yes."

"Send them to me."

We withdrew to another room, and there Craig looked over the copy of Hartley's affidavit, which Leslie carried. It was an

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

unusually clever statement for his client that Canby had prepared. It appeared to be very frank. Canby said that the alleged purpose of seeing Louise was to "refresh" her mind regarding certain facts relating to the Hartley case. "Of course"—he put the words in Hartley's mouth—"we had to keep her friendly to us."

The interesting part, not yet given out to the papers, had to do with Hartley's suggestion that there was on foot a plot to blackmail him. Canby told of the janitress of the building having overheard quarreling in the Lavender beauty-shop below, late Saturday night, and a man's voice, in a sarcastic tone, saying, "You are a second-hand girl—slightly shop-worn."

Canby suggested that there might have been blackmail on the part of her former husband, Tom Kinsella; that to Kinsella Louise, with her wealthy friends, was a gold mine. He also attached a letter which the janitress had got out of the waste-basket, a letter from Kinsella asking for five thousand dollars to square a forfeited bail-bond and keep out of jail. According to the theory, Louise had threatened Kinsella with divorce. Then had followed: "You're a second-hand girl," and Kinsella had told her she couldn't get the divorce—that he would prove in court what she was.

By now the beauty-shop and the apartment were the G. H. Q. of the newspaper detectives, most of whom I knew. Under pretense of letting them interview Kennedy, I got them together so that he could interview them.

So it was that we got the advantage of their nearly two days of investigation. They had just dug up the story of the spite-marriage of Louise. It seemed she had married Kinsella for spite or in pique, that she really cared for another fellow. At any rate, she had soon left her husband. Tom Kinsella had never got over the fact that Louise had thrown him over. "I will get square with her—some day," he had said.

Another thing they had dug up was that Kinsella and his crowd on Broadway had been known to have once engaged in a blackmail shake-down of a rich young chap over a "Follies" girl. The crowd had got the name among the flappers as "The Grifters."

Kennedy shot a covert glance at us. I knew of what he was thinking. Was it to get out of this and the prosecution that would follow that Kinsella had needed five thousand dollars so desperately?

"Louise Lavender must have been a mighty fascinating girl," observed Kennedy, "with the millionaire, Hartley, on her list, the actor, Halliwell, this white-light sport, Kinsella—enemy husband."

"That ought to give you something to work on," supplied Warsky, as we left the newspaper men, "Kinsella, this wise guy, and Hartley, the millionaire philanderer. Either one of them's better than Bert Halliwell to work on, I think."

Kennedy said nothing in reply to Warsky's bias. Yet I could not help following Warsky's reasoning. Did Kinsella kill the goose that laid the golden eggs in order to get one big egg—the jewels—worth more than five thousand dollars that would keep him out of trouble, perhaps jail?

Craig had evidently no notion of being dogged by Warsky.

"Suppose, with your well-known Broadway connections, Warsky," he suggested, "you take a hand in this—go after Kinsella."

"I believe I will. But no matter if it does turn out it's Kinsella, Kennedy, the offer stands—see?"

We parted from Dr. Leslie also, and Kennedy revealed that his program was next to see both of the babies, and, first of all, the Hamlin Hartley Lavender boy.

WE FOUND the home of John Lafferty, chauffeur, in one of those walk-up apartments—walk up about five flights.

Ella Lafferty had changed her name to Louise Lavender. Lafferty might be a better trade-name with a taxi-cab than with a beauty-shop.

Old Mrs. Lafferty was a motherly woman, the kind that is old at sixty, a pious woman, a widow who had struggled on in a small up-state town with a large family and had brought them up to the best of her ability.

Little Hamlin Hartley Lavender, or Lafferty, whatever his name might eventually become, was a sturdy youngster of three or four years, playing about the floor of the flat with a much battered tin taxi that once could have been wound up. It did not run at all, and he was engaged in pushing it across the floor as Kennedy started to ingratiate himself with the still weepy Mrs. Lafferty.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

We were soon interrupted by a howl from youngster. He had tripped on the rug, fallen over the tin taxi, and the jagged little mud-guard had scratched his arm rather severely. I picked him up, unwound a clean handkerchief, cleansed the scratch and bound it up. But the young gentleman would have none of me or my handkerchief. He threw it off, with its drops of blood, and I picked it up, balled it hastily in my pocket.

"Keep that—carefully," whispered Kennedy, as the motherly Mrs. Lafferty hugged the scared little shaver to her breast and his cries quickly diminished.

We had got no further than that Mrs. Lafferty seemed as much in the dark as to the real parentage on the father's side of the baby as we were—except that, naturally, she would not say so openly—when a noise outside interrupted us.

The door was opened by Mrs. Lafferty. Bert Halliwell entered the room. For the instant he was nonplused at seeing us, then must have recollected that we could have heard his remarks in the laboratory to Hope. But he received a smile of welcome from Mrs. Lafferty that was sufficient to indicate his standing in her heart. He chose to say nothing about our presence.

"Well, Mrs. Lafferty, and how are you feeling to-day?" he asked. "Are you strong enough to meet one of my best friends? I've already taken the liberty of bringing her along. But she is so thoughtful she wouldn't come in until I found out if you would see her."

"Sure, Bertie! Just bring her along in. I've been tryin' to help this here Mr. Kennedy, but I guess I don't know much about my own Louise, that was christened 'Ella.' Maybe you could help him."

A moment, and Halliwell had Hope Hartley in the room.

I thought of what a position this was for her. But with wonderful tact she acknowledged the greetings of everybody and proceeded to get acquainted with the little boy.

"Was grandma with baby at his christening?" she asked, smiling up at Mrs. Lafferty.

A cloud passed over the wrinkled face.

"No, I wasn't. I couldn't tell you exactly if he has been christened. It will worry me until I know."

Halliwell had not introduced Hope as "Mrs. Hartley." He had made that concession to her. He had called her "Miss Livingstone," her maiden name.

"Probably you will find some record in Louise's papers. They present you with a paper, don't they?" asked Bert.

"But, Bert, I have gone through her papers." Mrs. Lafferty squeezed the child up to her lovingly.

Already Hope had won him. He was making efforts to get to her and play.

"Whom does he look like?" she inquired.

"His mother. The very image of her, I'll say." Mrs. Lafferty looked proudly at him.

"It's strange, Mrs. Lafferty," pursued Halliwell, "but do you know the police are suspecting me of knowing more than I'm telling about the death of Louise? They claim I was one of her lovers. I'm in a devil of a fix. We were always good friends. You know how we used to play together when we were kids."

The old lady was crying softly.

"Oh, I wish she had married you back home, Bert!" The sadly bent figure was shaken with sobs. "None of this would have happened."

Hope had the boy. He was sitting on her lap playing with the trinkets in her bag. Halliwell noticed this.

"Could you give me any idea of the boy's father? Have you ever met him?"

"No. I know nothing of him."

"Have you any idea where your daughter kept her papers?" interposed Craig.

"I heard of a safe down in her beauty-parlor."

"But the police searched that," put in Halliwell. "There was nothing in it."

"Well, now I think of it, Louise once told me she wanted some kind of contraption built in the wall."

"A wall safe—in the beauty-parlor?" repeated Kennedy. "I'll get Dr. Leslie again; we'll see if there is one."

THERE were quick steps outside in the hall. A little woman actually ran in past us, seized Bert Halliwell by the arm. Jerking him round, she dropped his arm in disgust. Gazing from her four and a half feet of sauciness up into his six feet of surprise, arms akimbo, she fairly exploded.

"So!"

I recognized Lucy Lovett. She had heard

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

the last remarks out in the hall. Mrs. Lafferty was agape. Hope tried to slip out. The lithe figure bounded between Hope and the door.

"No, you don't! Not until I've had my say. I've caught you two together. I heard you were coming here. Never mind how. I'm going to put this poor old lady wise. Do you know her, Mrs. Lafferty?"

"Miss Livingstone, Bert told me."

"Years ago. Mrs. Hamlin Hartley now, the unloved wife of that banker. He left her for your daughter, they say. Has she been pumping you?"

Mrs. Lafferty looked askance at Hope and shook her head.

"Well, folks," interrupted Halliwell, "this little lady is Lucy Lovett, Lucy Halliwell, my wife. Glad you came, Lucy."

"You brazen sheik of the pictures!" she blazed. "I hate you! You think all the girls fall for you. Well, I'm through!" Hope had started to speak, but Lucy turned on her. "No—no—no, you husband stealer, I don't want to hear you!" She turned to Mrs. Lafferty. "That woman knows about your girl's death. Ask her what she was doing in Louise Lavender's rooms the night before they found her, how she came to drop the script of your picture, Bert. See her get white? The truth hurts—you welsher! You won't steal my husband and get away with it! You murdered Louise because she stole yours. Well, I'll give your life to justice—because you robbed me!"

Hope was leaning against the door, almost ready to faint. Halliwell saw her, took a chair to give her. But Lucy grabbed it from him. She swung it on Bert.

"There!" She turned on Hope. "Lawyer Canby, who is fighting for the rights of Mr. Hartley, told me. The Livingstone money'll never get you out of this!"

Hope straightened, dignity, scorn, breeding challenging hate, jealousy, commonplaceness. She spoke in a quiet tone.

"A murderess? You have heard that—all of you. The same courts you talk about will make you pay for that!"

Lucy was enraged at Hope's superiority. She leaned over and slapped her. Hope was white to the lips, but she kept her dignity. Lucy was wild with hate. She tried to do it again. Suddenly she found herself sprawling on the floor.

"Good-by, Bert." Hope bowed. "That little trick I learned from my father's Jap valet. It will tame the tiger-woman."

Craig had opened the door, and we followed Hope Hartley out, leaving Halliwell to settle the dispute with his wife as best he could. On the street Kennedy stopped suddenly, looking at Hope.

"Why didn't you play fair? Why didn't you tell me you were up at Louise's apartment?"

"Because, if you remember, Mr. Kennedy, I didn't come to you about the murder. I asked you to help me prove the legitimacy of Beth. Let others prove other things!"

"But," urged Craig, "Beth would not want her mother held in a murder. That would hurt her, too. I want to see Beth."

"Now? She is at home. Come!"

AS WE taxied over to the home of wealth and exquisite taste in the new old Turtle Hill district, I thought of what Lucy had spilled—that Hamlin Hartley knew that his wife had been in Louise's apartment some time that night, that he had picked up a script of the picture with her name on it.

Hope Hartley led us to a flagstone-paved sun-room, one end enclosed in glass, looking out on a beautiful garden. Plants and flowers seemed everywhere. Through the glass we could see the child playing outdoors. Beth Hartley was a beautiful child, but unlike her mother. Black curls covered her head with ringlets, and her eyes were a merry blue. Rosy cheeked, she was a picture of health. She had not seen her mother yet, and seemed to be having some disagreement with her nurse. She stamped her little foot wilfully.

"She has her father's looks and my difficulty to keep cool under fire," said Hope, with a frown. "Marie is a new nurse."

Beth stood defiant, rebellious, then suddenly burst into tears. Hope moved closer to the glass door. The child saw her mother and ran toward her. The soft tears turned to wild, healthy sobs as Craig opened the door for the tear-blinded baby.

"Mother! Mother! Oh-h, Marie is naughty!" Beth ran into her mother's arms and Hope consoled her.

"Tell mother, dear."

"Ma-Marie told me d-daddy wasn't my daddy. I asked her why, and she said he

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

was some other baby's daddy. He *is* my daddy—my dear, dear daddy——"

"Sh, child. Don't think such thoughts. Marie will have to go for putting such nonsense in your little head. Of course he is." The big brown eyes, full of mother love, looked up at Craig, with tears just hanging on the beautiful lashes. The low, modulated voice murmured sadly, "Gossip breaks more hearts than death, Mr. Kennedy, causes more misery and trouble." She straightened. "I'll fight the whole world to protect this child!"

In whispered sentences Hope Hartley admitted the whole story. She had been at Louise's apartment. She had gone there to get Hamlin away. She had got in, she asserted vehemently, at about ten o'clock, alone. The telephone-bell had rung and she had answered it, disguising her voice, hoping to learn something. It was Canby calling with the usual precaution for her husband. "Ah—Mrs. Hartley!" He had recognized her voice. She fled.

"There is just one other thing," added Kennedy. "If you really want to prove that this little girl is his daughter, you will oblige me with a couple of drops of the child's blood—and your own."

Kennedy was now in a quandary. He wanted to go to the laboratory. Also, he wanted to go to the beauty-parlor again, and we went there first.

Outside, we came upon Bert Halliwell, arguing with the policeman who was refusing him admittance. Kennedy was pleased. A nod to the guard was sufficient and we got in. Immediately Kennedy began a search for the wall safe.

"Well!" We turned, five minutes later, after a fruitless tapping and sounding, to see the slender, dark Hamlin Hartley, and with him the dapper, precise attorney, Canby. "Looking for buried treasure?" asked Hartley in a tone of raillery.

Kennedy said nothing, but went on tapping.

"Treasure?" Halliwell repeated sarcastically. "I imagine she had some. They tell me her motto was: 'Live on your business earnings. Then, when you find some one who will set you up in an apartment of your own, save all he gives you for a nest-egg.'"

Hartley smiled superciliously, elevated his brows and slowly took a long ivory cigarette-holder from between his teeth.

"I believe I have the honor of addressing Mr. Halliwell. There has been something I wanted to ask you. They say that Louise was married, but really she cared for another fellow. Were you the other fellow, to spite whom she married this Kinsella?"

Halliwell reddened. He had a temper which made it easy for a director in a sequence of fight-scenes in a picture. There was nothing here to make him control it. Before we knew it, the star, was upon Hartley. There was a genuine exhibition of red blood—and blue. Canby butted in. Noses and eyes suffered, but Canby's nose suffered most before Craig leaped in and undertook the direction of this scene with a grim mutter:

"Can that stuff—all of you!"

Having played the part of peace-maker, Kennedy proceeded to bind up the wounds, but, I thought, with slight attention to the wounded three and great care as to handkerchiefs and towels that cleansed the wounds, preserving all separately.

He sent them all on their way, making sure that they went separately without another encounter; then, having satisfied himself that there was no secret safe in the wall, we left for the laboratory.

THERE, a package, as promised by Dr. Leslie, was waiting, and at once Kennedy unfolded the handkerchiefs and towels he had carried, took my own handkerchief and plunged into some test.

It was just after dinner-time, or what should have been dinner-time, when the telephone-bell rang. Kennedy answered.

"Good! Bring him here." He turned to me, hanging up, ready for another call. "Abe Warsky took a hand," he explained. "He seems to have an underground with the cabarets. He has trapped that rat, Kinsella. I am having him brought here. Yes; get me Dr. Leslie, please!"

He turned from a hurried talk with Leslie as to using his own and the authority of the police, and plunged back into his work. Leslie arrived, and a moment later Warsky, chest out, walked in with Kinsella, dapper, flashy, brazen. Kennedy directed Leslie to prick Kinsella's finger under the nail and squeeze out a couple of drops of blood. Kennedy left what he had been doing and began at once to examine that.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Kinsella sulked at the very end of the laboratory. Warsky watched him like a spider with its next meal enmeshing itself in its web. With his fat body bent forward and palms on his knees, he reflected on the thousands tied up in that last picture.

"Look! Look at all the bottles!" A childish treble interrupted the silence. "What's that? Look, mother!"

Hope Hartley, in the doorway, was smiling with an effort.

"Good evening. My daughter's late hours are making her irrepressible. Come to mother, Beth."

Canby and Hamlin Hartley came in. I saw Hope start and grip the arm of the chair. She kept her composure, but withal I knew she was suffering. Beth seemed to feel it. She lavished so much affection on Hope that it made the group stand out. Hartley looked covertly at his wife, and colored, too. Canby was self-possessed, sure of his client's case.

Again the door opened, and I heard Halliwell's well modulated voice.

"Sorry! Didn't keep you waiting, I trust? Ah—Mrs. Hartley, I think we should have left the detective work to Mr. Kennedy. Happy to see you so well after that unreasonable encounter. I believe it was inspired." He looked with calm animosity at Hartley.

KENNEDY did not purpose having the beauty-shop episode repeated. He wiped his hands on an acid-stained towel, flung off his smock and cleared his throat.

"I'm not going to keep you long," he said, "but there's something that I want you to follow me closely in—here, before it comes to court. Although the inheritance, according to definite Mendelian principles, of group-specific substances in human blood has been known for some twenty years, the application of this knowledge to medico-legal questions has not yet been made. I purpose making it."

Instantly we knew what he was driving at; our attention was directed toward the baby Beth on her mother's lap.

"What is known as 'isoagglutination' is the agglutination of red blood-cells by contact with blood-serum derived from another individual of the same species. With regard to the behavior of their serum and red blood-cells, all human beings fall into one of three groups. In the first group, the red cells are not agglutinable by any other human serum, while the serum is found to agglutinate the red cells of all persons not belonging to this first group. In the second group, the red cells are agglutinated by the serums of the first and of the third groups, while the serum agglutinates the cells of the third group only. The third is the obverse of the second. Its red cells are agglutinated by the serums of the first and second groups, and its serum agglutinates only cells of the second group."

"How is that?" asked Canby.

"Lansteiner, who investigated the subject, concluded," replied Craig, "that these phenomena were due to the presence of two kinds of specific agglutinin, of which one was present in the serum of the second group, another in the serum of the third group and both in the serum of the first. Then, some years later, a fourth group was recognized. In this group, the cells are agglutinated by the serum of all the other groups, while their serum contains no agglutinin whatever. These groups never change. They are what you might call the 'finger-prints of the blood.'

"As a baby is developed in the embryo," Kennedy went on, "the specific agglutinability of the red cells, called agglutinogen, appears first and is usually present at birth. The specific agglutinative power of the blood-serum, called agglutinin, which is to characterize the individual through life, may be absent at birth and may not appear for some months."

"Are these qualities in the blood of everybody?" asked Halliwell.

"In the blood of everybody. Group one is the most numerous. Over forty per cent. of people. And it can never be hybrid. Group two is the next most numerous. Just under forty per cent. It can be hybrid only with regard to its dominant quality. The same is true of group three. About twelve to fifteen per cent. Group four is the rarest. Only two to five per cent. of people."

"What happens when people marry?" Hartley's voice was a bit shaky.

"I'm coming to that. Unions of men and women from each of these groups give children definitely in groups that can be expected. Union of one and one give only one. Union of one and two and of two and two give only one and two. Union of one

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

and three and of three and three give only one and three. I have here reduced the matter to a definite table of instances where a child must be illegitimate, that is, not the child of a supposed father."

Craig reached into a drawer of the table and drew out a small chart.

"This may seem rather negative. But it yields results that are positive enough in this case."

We studied the chart as it was passed about:

Known Mother	Supposed Father	Child cannot be		
I	I	II	III	IV
I	II		III	IV
I	III	II		IV
II	I		III	IV
II	II		III	IV
III	I	II		IV
III	III	II		IV

"That is as far as you can go?" asked Canby.

"Yes. But it is far enough here—" Kennedy paused, as with a pencil he indicated group after group. "Hope Hartley belongs to group one. Hamlin Hartley belongs to group two. Bert Halliwell belongs to group one. Hope Hartley, in group one, and Bert Halliwell, also in group one, could have a child only in group one, never in groups two, three or four. Little Beth Hartley is in group two. Therefore Beth Hartley could not be the child of Hope Hartley and Bert Halliwell."

Hope was leaning forward, wide-eyed. A smile played on Halliwell's face. Kennedy gave no chance for interruption.

"Hamlin Hartley is in group two. Groups one and two produce only one and two. I believe that Beth, in group two, is really the child of Hope and Hamlin Hartley."

There was a sharp intake of air from Hope. Hamlin stared straight ahead. Kennedy did not pause.

"Louise Lavender was in group one, also," he pursued. "As we saw, Hamlin Hartley was in group two. There is another man in this case, who is in group three. Louise, in group one, and Hamlin, in group two, could have had only a child in groups one or two. They could not have had a child in three or four. But Louise, in one, and this other man, in three, could have had a child in groups one or three, not in two or four. The little Lavender boy is in group three. He could not have been the son of Hamlin Hartley. But he probably is the son of this other man—this man in group three."

"Who?" demanded Warsky. "Kinsella?"

"No," replied Craig. "Kinsella is in group one."

Warsky's face fell.

"Who, then?"

"Just a moment." Kennedy turned to Hartley. "It's been my observation, Hartley, that if a man will give a woman half a chance—just half a chance—she'll come through and be fine. I don't mean that he shouldn't give her all. But I do mean that you haven't given that little wife of yours even half a chance. It's your fault—all your fault!"

BABY BETH was looking shyly at Hamlin Hartley. Here was the real man whose picture she kissed every night before she went to sleep. She was standing by Hope's knee, and her little chubby hands were covering her face. Through her fingers she watched her father. Now and then she would drop this digital screen and smile in Hartley's direction—a shy smile. She was willing to love this big man who looked at her mother so sadly, timidly—but she must be won.

"Mother dear, the eyes are kinder in him than in that picture of daddy I kiss so much." She wafted a little kiss, blowing on the palm of her hand.

Hartley laughed nervously. Hope's face wore the rosy blush of youth.

"Are you thinking good thoughts, now?" asked Beth.

"Why do you ask that, Beth?" inquired Hartley gravely.

"Well, when I'm naughty, mother tells me my eyes are unkind. When I'm thinking good things, she can tell. It makes her sorry to have me think naughty thoughts." Hope tried to silence the child, but the baby prattle was encouraged by Hamlin. "Mother used to cry when she saw your picture, and she wouldn't let anybody but me wash off the kiss-marks on the glass."

Hamlin Hartley stood up.

"Is that so, Hope? Did you really care?"

Hope Hartley lowered her head to conceal the beautiful eyes. She had suffered so. She could not surrender lightly.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Yes," she said quietly; "once."

Hamlin stood fumbling with his hat, first looking at Craig and then at me and finally at his beautiful wife.

"Oh, hang it all, Hope, I feel worse than I ever felt in all my life! I know what I want to say—but I've been all kinds of a fool—a cad. I haven't the nerve even to touch you. I only know my eyes have been opened. I'll punch the jaw of the first gossip-monger who breathes a word against you!"

Kennedy had been busy with some glass plates, without a word passing among us and pressing a different glass plate to each forehead. As Hartley paused awkwardly, Kennedy resumed:

"This new agglutinin test has shown that Beth is not the child of Hope Hartley and Bert Halliwell, could not be—but very likely is the child of Hope Hartley and Hamlin Hartley. The little boy we saw with old Mrs. Lafferty is not really Hamlin Hartley's child. He is the child of the dead beauty-culturist and some one else in group three of the blood-test.

"I have made a quick study of these glass plates on which I have forehead-smears of you all. There was a smudge on the glass door of the cabinet where the jewel-case of Louise Lavender was hidden—also, I believe, where she kept her sleeping-powders. It is the smudge where a forehead has been pressed against the glass, looking in. Did you ever know there is a science of poroscopy, the arrangement of the pores? We can tell, without one failure in a billion, whose forehead that was." Kennedy regarded the pair standing, with the little girl. "Hope Hartley knew that Canby knew she was there," he added. "At the same time she feared that Hamlin Hartley might have actually done the murder, by accident, to get his letters. Hamlin Hartley knew she had been there. He had picked up her script of the picture-play. Canby had seen it Fearing Hope might have done it, Hartley therefore would not be so vigilant in catching the criminal as he might have been. That made it look darker for him.

"Canby, knowing that he had always a hold over Hartley and Hope both, chose to throw suspicion on Kinsella. The finding of the script, the telephone recognition had been his opportunity—his opportunity for framing his client—cheating on the side."

Craig paused, then shot out in sharp staccato:

"The forehead-smear is that of Canby, Canby of group three of the blood-test, probable father of the Lavender baby, before Hamlin Hartley ever knew Louise—Canby, crook attorney, in debt, trying to force Louise Lavender into a blackmailing scheme. He killed her because he feared it would become known that he was blackmailing his principal. Louise, influenced by Bert Halliwell, trying to play the game square, at least in some ways, balked at the plot, threatened, perhaps, to tell of what she was being forced into, expose who was the real father of the baby. So Canby killed her—took the jewels to make it look like robbery—anything but what it was!"

Leslie and I were flanking Canby as Warsky came, big-eyed, to Kennedy.

"The offer stands, Kennedy! This will certainly circus the picture!"

"Did you—really fear for me?" Hope had looked up at Hamlin at last.

"I was so afraid I didn't dare talk. I knew you had been there. Before I could hide it—he knew. What about me? Did you——"

"Hamlin, I was—wild!"

KENNEDY pushed me toward the door after Leslie and Canby and the rest.

It was one of those beautiful moments on this old earth that make our poor, futile efforts worth while to carry on.

Beth ran suddenly to her father.

"Come, daddy! Come to mother!"

Hope looked at Hartley. The child had breathed new life into their shattered romance.

"Hope, you helped me propose when I was a boy and you were a girl. Just make it a little easy for me now!"

"I am, Hamlin. I have kept your memory—for Beth. She is my little messenger of help for you. The child adores you, worships you—and so could——"

I found myself pushed violently through the door as Craig closed it gently. I looked back as it closed and caught just a glimpse of Hope and Hamlin in each other's arms, and Beth holding her mother's skirt with one chubby hand and her father's trousers with the other. Craig nodded to Warsky.

"That's my best fee!"

The next Craig Kennedy story will appear in October EVERYBODY'S—out September 15th.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

A Complete Novel

Top Dog

A Mix-up in Identities as Strange as the Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

By William Almon Wolff

Illustrations by Sidney H. Riesenberg

IN THE moment of proof that came with the flood, in that hour of a ruthless searching of men, of a cold and measured revelation of strength and weakness alike, Graham and Hasbrook were shown as they were made. They answered, each after his kind, that clamorous challenge in the night. The first intimations of the calamity that was overwhelming Lewistown came to each at about the same time. And Graham, upon the instant, was in action, risked his life at once to gain his end—freedom of further movement, once the fetters of the rising flood should be made fast about those who had not freed themselves in the beginning.

His was the swift, sure vision of the moment's need. Hasbrook's had a wider, farther range. He could fling his mind out, far beyond the black disaster of the crowding hour, and see consequences, ultimate, that were, to him, infinitely more ominous and menacing. But, seeing them, he could still stand by his window, fascinated by the rush of the black waters.

It was Graham's part, unthinking, driven only by the need of asserting his mastery over nature, over flood, to grasp at once the imminent danger—to fight his way through streets already awash toward the boat-house that held the means of conquest. And it was Hasbrook's to think of that recourse when already it was too late; to see and recognize Graham, guiding a small power-boat against the current—moving along a Lafayette Street that had become a tributary of the swollen and newly freed Mioto.

If Hasbrook—but, then, there were a hundred thousand to share his self-reproach, his wish that vision had come to him just a few hours sooner. All Lewistown was with him there—Graham among the rest, and Graham's father. All the city, all the Mioto valley, indeed, had had the warning.

Why, for two days all Lewistown had hailed the turbid, swollen river as a spectacle. In summer the Mioto was a trickling stream, dotted with gravel-bars. A pleasure river, with here and there above the town a pool for bathers artificially deepened; with a channel that served, save when there was drought, for canoes and small power-boats of light draft. But now, with the rain and the melting of the snows high in the wooded hills, March saw the Mioto as a torrent, clamorous with the tongues of all its tributaries. And Lewistown had watched it, and laughed, and gone home to the security of its comfortable homes.

Then, in the night, what had happened? A cloudburst? The breaking of some dam higher in the valley? No one knew. There was just the stark fact of peril—of a river emancipated from its ancient bounds and banks, spreading out over all the lower portions of the city.

And there, while Graham, exulting,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

fought against the current, stood Hasbrook, staring out over the water, seeing already a dull glare two blocks away, where the first fire had broken out. So much he could see with the eyes that showed him all the things of daily wont. But with the eyes of his mind, of his leaping, vivid imagination, he could see more. He could see the spreading of that fire, allied, for once, with the oldest and deadliest of its foes. He saw a city sacked, looted, flung open to maurauders, visited by pestilence that should complete the destruction of which this flood was only a beginning. And through that vision of ruin and desolation, eyes and heart and mind—and, above all, his fears—went straight to a single spot.

Then—that single craft, its engine chattering in the uncanny stillness that had fallen upon the city. And Graham—of all men under heaven, Graham!

"Jim!" he cried from his window.

And Graham heard, flung up his hand, made a trumpet of it and called to him.

"Come aboard!" he cried. "We'll see it through together——"

He hurried down the stairs. The water stood above the ground floor in the house; it was in an apartment-house, modern in construction, that he lived; the whole entrance was flooded. But doors stood open everywhere. The tenants of the house, frightened, were drawn together. They stood in no immediate danger.

But, driven by that other, lesser fear that had been at the heart of his vision, Hasbrook pushed past those who would have spoken to him. He came to a window fronting on the street, and just above what was then high-water mark saw Graham, a dozen feet away. Graham managed his boat skilfully, brought it up. Hasbrook perched himself on the window-sill, leaped as the boat came near, and fell, scrambling on all fours, but safe.

Hasbrook was shivering with excitement; he was as far from feeling fear for his own safety as Graham himself could be. Yet fear was clutching at him. A tremulous excitement shook him; now that, thanks to Graham, the chance to avert the ultimate disaster had been restored. And Graham, too, was shaken by excitement. But it moved him to a rough, fierce laughter, to exclamations of triumph as he steered between a rushing tree-trunk and a crazily dancing garage. There was no mirth in his laughter, no meaning in his cries.

"Forgot you," said Graham, when they had swung into Sixth Street from Lafayette, and come, so, into what was for the time a backwater, where the water moved sluggishly. "Knew you'd be all right, though. Let's pick up the colonel—he'll want to be in on this. And there'll be plenty for boats to do."

"Plenty!" Hasbrook echoed the word. "It's frightful, Jim! Look—there's another fire!"

"Natural-gas mains bursting—nothing to hold them."

"Jim—that stuff at the Mioto Trust! We've got to get at that box—the Number Two agreement——"

Graham stared.

"Safe enough there!"

"That's not it! Jim, can you imagine what this may be before we're through? Suppose some one else opens those vaults—gets at that box?"

"Hadn't thought. By God, though, you're right! We can't take even the slimmest chance on that! That's first—after we've got the colonel. He's got the keys, anyway——"

"If we're in time——"

THEY turned from Sixth Street into Rogers. There, once more, there was a swift current. But now it favored their progress, gave evidence, so, that the flood was still rising. Graham frowned.

"It keeps coming," he said. "Lord! Where does all the water come from? There must be hell loose up the valley."

"Farther down, too," said Hasbrook. "We'll have the worst of it, but they'll catch it down there, too. I——"

A sudden wailing shriek interrupted him. He stopped, turned toward the sound. Before them a wooden two-story house was swaying drunkenly as the waters tore at its frail foundations. And from an upper window, so close to the swirling water that she might have stooped and plunged her hand into it, a woman leaned out with a child in her arms.

"Help!" she cried again and again. "Help!"

The boat swerved sharply; then, with an exclamation, Graham put her back upon her course.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Jim!" Hasbrook's face was white. "We can't leave her——"

But the moment's need had gripped Graham again.

"We haven't time now," he said, gruffly. "Later—we'll come back——"

"But, Jim—for God's sake—to leave that woman and her baby——"

"I tell you there's no time now—there's no immediate danger——"

"I can't—I——"

Hasbrook stood up, swayed and lurched with the movement of the boat. Graham cried out sharply, reached back and caught his sleeve.

"Man—you're crazy! What good can you do—jumping out? You couldn't get to the house, anyway, against this current."

Sick and shaken, Hasbrook dropped down. It was true. The moment of opportunity had gone. And he could do no good. He sat still, waiting. It was always so. In any crisis Graham always ruled him.

Now the swaying house was far behind them; they had turned again into a street where the current ran less fiercely. Here were great, old-fashioned houses, dating back to the comfortable 'Eighties or even an earlier decade. Here, before fashion had set all the leaders of Lewistown to seeking suburban homes, the great men of the city had dwelt; here the Grahams, father and son, still maintained their residence.

Graham steered the boat between two trees, skirted a stone gate-post that still projected above the water, made his way along the driveway. On the roof of the piazza a tall man, wrapped in a long coat, stood. He saw them coming.

"Good work, boy!" he said. "Hello, Hasbrook! Glad to see you."

This was John Graham, president of the Mioto Trust Company, one of the financial leaders of the whole Mioto Valley. He reached down to steady the boat; his son caught a cornice and held her so while he stepped aboard.

"There'll be enough for all of us to do," he said. "Better head toward high ground. There must be thousands caught——"

"That's for later," Jim Graham said, crisply. "Dad, Hasbrook's thought of something we must do first. We can't leave that Number Two agreement to be found in case things go to a general smash—and they may——"

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

John Graham was silent for a moment.

"No," he said, then: "There's still time. Go to the bank."

Swiftly and skilfully Graham steered his way among the flooded streets until they came to the great lake that had been Jackson Square. In the faint light before the coming dawn there was need of careful steering to avoid the trolley-poles and the maze of wires that they upheld.

Hasbrook sat still. In his ears there rang still the cries of the woman they had abandoned with her child. He stared at the Grahams as though they had been strangers he had never seen before. Did they feel no horror at this catastrophe? Oh, he had been the one to think of the need of this errand that had made them oblivious to thought of others, of the general disaster. But even his fear had not been enough to drown out his impulse to save that woman.

NOW again the nervous din of the engine died down; the boat glided up to the great bronze doors of the Mioto Trust. From an upper window a man looked down.

"The saints preserve and keep us! 'Tis yourself, then!" the watchman cried out in his gratitude. "And did you think of old Tim, Colonel? Just a minute till I'll be droppin' down——"

"Hold on; we're coming in first," said Graham. "Is there any water inside yet, Tim?"

"I've not been below to see. There's none on the ground floor—there may be the flood in the basement."

"The first floor's what we want," said Jim. "All right, Tim; we won't be a minute." He made the boat fast, tied the painter to the grill above the doors. "All right. We can make it, Jim. Better stay in the boat, dad. It's too steep a climb for you——"

"Nonsense! I can do it. Up with you, and give me a hand. Got a flash-light?"

"In the locker," said Jim Graham to Hasbrook. "Got it? Right!"

They swarmed up, made their way in easily enough through the second-story window Tim had opened to speak to them. He had found an old-fashioned lantern when the lights had gone out. There was a dim light in the great room now.

"All right!" said Colonel Graham. "No time to waste, though."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Jim Graham took swift command.

"Dad—stay up here, at the head of the stairs," he said. "Jim, you and I'll go down. What we want's in the small vault on the next floor. Got that light? All right! Come on!"

They made their way, Graham leading, down the narrow spiral staircase that led to the main banking-room below. Hasbrook's flash sent a wavering pencil of light ahead. He turned it toward the great barred windows. They might have been beneath the sea, staring out through a window in a submarine. Hasbrook started back.

"That glass can't hold!" he cried. "Jim—for heaven's sake——"

He won no answer. And now sheer shame drove him on to follow Graham, nerving himself to take each step. He held his light while Graham worked at the safe. The door swung open at last. Graham thrust in his hand, groped in a drawer that he opened, took out a bundle of papers and thrust them into his pocket.

"All right!" he cried. The great steel door swung back.

There was a sudden rending sound—a crash, a rush of mighty waters. Then they were struggling together against the flood, reaching toward the stairs. Hasbrook heard a cry above the rush of the water. Both were being tossed about. Everything faded into blackness——

Now it was Hasbrook, lying still, struggling. Slowly, painfully, his mind woke. He was conscious of excruciating pain in back and stomach, of a dull, throbbing aching in his head, of the way some one was seeking to drag his arms from their sockets. Dimly he heard voices, began to struggle.

"Let me—lemme—alone!"

In his ears his voice sounded strange, alien.

"My boy—thank God!"

He struggled again, tried to sit up. Some one held water to his lips.

"Jim—Jim—my boy!"

He recognized Colonel Graham's voice—saw him, too, and the tears then ran down his cheeks. And then he saw something else. He saw a figure lying on its back, arms stretched out grotesquely. It was a body. It was his body—the body of Jim Hasbrook! He stared. His hand moved in a feeble, sweeping gesture.

"I—he—" His voice failed, and he sank back, once more unconscious.

HASBROOK woke again slowly—in the dim, vague way of one coming back reluctantly to a consciousness bound to bring back memories of pain and terror. His head still ached dully; his whole body was sore and numb. Very gradually, by slow degrees, he made himself aware of the room in which he lay—of the the bed, of the windows, of various objects of furniture. He stirred, put out his hand, raised himself. At the effort, sharp pains shot through him, but they were almost welcome. For his mind was groping toward and coming near to a conception appalling, incredible.

Through a window he could see the bare branches of trees. It was very still; only the joyous, persistent singing of a bird came to his ears.

He was groping toward memory, but as yet he had no clue to the mystery of this room. He continued the tentative movement he had begun, put out one foot, found that he could—stood up, so, at last, supporting himself against the bed. And now suddenly he faced a mirror, and in it saw—Jim Graham!

All at once memory was full-grown and living in him. He remembered everything—the rush of the green water from outside the windows of the bank, the struggle in the darkness, a blow, that frightful moment of wakening in which he had seen his own body lying stretched out before him.

With an effort like nothing that he could remember in all his life he fought back the struggle his mind was making to take refuge in another lapse into unconsciousness. He knew that he must grapple with this monstrous thing that had befallen him—this illusion so real that even a mirror could reflect it. He fought back great waves of nauseating sickness; he stood, clinging with both hands to the rail of the bed. Blackness and oblivion rushed up to engulf him with a power that made them fairly visible. It was like the battle with the water.

But now he won. Shaking like a leaf, so weak that had he relaxed his hold upon the bed he must have fallen, he stood there, gathering the forces of his mind, of his whole being. But now he knew that he was in command of his spirit, that he could trust

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

eyes and mind to do his bidding. And, knowing that, he lifted his eyes again at last and looked into the glass.

He saw again what he had seen before. It was Jim Graham, not himself, who looked back at him from the mirror. Desperately he sought the answer to the riddle of that monstrous untruth it told. What extraordinary, what unparalleled freak of fate was this? His own thoughts, memories, sensations—these he knew. And they were his. But if the mirror told the truth they were dwelling in Jim Graham's body—in the body of his own closest friend. And this—he knew it now—was Jim's room in the Grahams' country house.

He could remember all that had happened, clearly enough—all up to that moment of oblivion that had followed a crashing blow upon his head. He and Jim had been struggling together in the water. What next?

Why, he and Jim must have been thrown up to the head of the staircase by the water and dragged up, battered, more dead than alive. And Tim and Colonel Graham had worked over them. But—that body, lying so still. They'd worked over Jim first, of course. A man would turn first to his own son.

But—that body, lying still. A body. A dead body—his. But he was alive. And Jim Graham's body. That, too, was alive. It moved as he—he, Jim Hasbrook—willed that it should move. He had his own eyes to assure him that Jim Hasbrook's body was dead. And that Jim Graham's lived.

His nails sank deep into his palms. What—what was he forced to think? His—his spirit—it must have taken flight. It must have hovered, disembodied, there in that room, while they worked, those living men, upon bodies dead, deserted, abandoned. His soul, his spirit, hovering so, reluctant to take flight—it must have entered into Jim Graham's body! He was himself—and he was his friend——

THE handle of the door turned; the door itself was pushed open. He saw Colonel Graham. The old man looked white and feeble—older, infinitely older.

"Jim!" he cried. Concern came into his voice. "Boy, you've no business to be out of bed! Jim—you've been very close to death."

Hasbrook stared, speechless. Here was a last confirmation of the incredible thing.

"I—I'm all right—" he said weakly. He was struggling for words. He must force John Graham to believe him.

"Poor Hasbrook's gone," said Graham. "Died instantly—he never had a chance. His skull was smashed in—he wasn't drowned. He must have been thrown against something sharp. We couldn't have saved him, even if there'd been time to work over both of you——"

"But—but—I—Colonel—I'm Hasbrook, I tell you—I'm not your son——"

The old man's eyes were troubled.

"Steady, boy," he said. "When you came to first, you were trying to say something. No wonder—no wonder! It's been a frightful experience. Hallucinations. Don't try to talk—don't think about it. I'm trying to get a nurse. But"—he shuddered—"it's a terrible calamity. We're afraid hundreds are dead. Get into bed again. Be still——"

"No!" Hasbrook's voice rang out. Only—it was Jim Graham's voice. He knew its ring. "You've got to understand—you must believe me! I've seen myself—I've seen *him* in the glass! I tell you—I looked down back there—I saw myself lying dead with my own eyes! I tell you I'm Jim Hasbrook! God knows how or why—but somehow we changed places out there—Jim and I. We were dead—we were both dead, I tell you! And you brought one of us back—but it was I who came, not he. I'm living—I'm living in his body. And he——"

"Jim, boy"—it was easy to see what was in John Graham's mind—"sleep now—we'll talk later. The shock—your mind's not balanced——"

"I tell you I'm as rational this minute as I've ever been in all my life! Good God! If I were going mad, I'd have gone stark crazy when I first looked in the glass! Try me—ask me things only your son could answer."

"Jim, of course I don't think you're mad. It's the shock—seeing poor Hasbrook's body—your friend."

He came across to the bed, sat down, put his arm about Jim's shoulders. Hasbrook flung it away.

"You've got to know—got to believe me!" he cried.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

John Graham shook his head.

"This obsession—" he muttered. "I wonder—Margaret—even though—she can't refuse to help now——"

"Margaret! Good God! Margaret! She—she loved him—and I—I've got to tell her, too!"

John Graham stared. For the first time there was in his eyes a dawning fear.

"Jim, don't you remember—what you told me last night? When you came back from seeing her—just before the flood."

"I told you nothing! It was he. She was to marry him—and now I——"

John Graham stood up. His mouth was working; his pallor was greater than ever. Horror and fear were in his eyes—and something that grew out of them—a dawning hatred. His lips moved, but for a moment they made no sound.

"I don't know what happened. It's as mysterious to me as it can be to you." Hasbrook's voice was high with excitement. "We've got to understand one another."

John Graham stared at him. He put his hand into his waistcoat pocket, took out a small white box.

"Do you know this?"

Hasbrook shook his head. John Graham swayed, went crashing down. He lay still; only the stertorous sound of his breathing gave proof that he was alive at all. From his forehead there ran a little stream of blood. Hasbrook, clinging to the bed, stared at him or a minute; fright and relief were struggling in his mind. Then his weakness fell away. He reached the door, opened it, stood calling.

"Help!" he cried. "Come here—some one—help!"

He could hear voices far away, the sound of running feet. Dawson, Colonel Graham's butler, came first; other servants, pale and frightened, were close behind him.

"Mr. Jim—what's wrong, sir?"

"It's—it's—" Hasbrook had to make up his mind in that moment. Yet he had no choice; he knew that. "It's my—father. Send for a doctor—he's had a stroke, I'm afraid."

WEAK as he was, Hasbrook helped Dawson lift John Graham. The old man was placed upon Jim Graham's bed. Hasbrook broke the grip of his fingers on the small white box opened it curiously, and saw inside a diamond ring. He shook his head. Here was a mystery insoluble, and, after all, profoundly insignificant beside that other mystery that cried out to all his senses for solution.

It was no longer raining. Canton Farms, the Graham country place, half farm, half suburban estate, lay still, however, under the gray pall of the March twilight. Everywhere tree and bush were in bud; Hasbrook, looking out, waiting for the doctor, could see the city and the pall of smoke that hung over it. And thought of the disaster reminded him suddenly of the reason for the personal calamity that had overwhelmed him. He went back to John Graham, overcame the repugnance that held him back for a moment and looked in the pockets of the old man's coat for those papers, so perilous, so terribly compromising, that had drawn him and his friend to the death-trap of the bank.

He found nothing—a wallet, empty of anything significant, a cigar-case, a letter or two. John Graham, even in his anxiety, may have hidden those papers. The other possibility—that they had never been taken from Jim's own pocket——

That thought brought him back sharply to the memory of the incredible truth. He called for Dawson, asked for the clothes he had been wearing. Jim Graham's things were brought to him. They were dry, now, but creased and shapeless. He went through the pockets; there was no trace of the papers that he sought. And then the doctor came—a young man he had never seen before, called Norton. He dressed in Jim's clothes while Norton was with the old man, was ready when the doctor came out. He looked closely at Hasbrook.

"Don't get up," he said. Here—" He took Hasbrook's hand, his finger on Jim's pulse. "Hm. Shock. I'll give you something to brace you up. Your father—well, I can't be very encouraging."

"A stroke, of course?"

"Yes. Paralysis is practically complete. I think—mind you, I can't be sure yet—but I think he'll live. For a time, at any rate."

"His mind?"

"With certain limitations, probably all right. I doubt if he'll be able to speak again. He may live some time. I'll try to get a nurse for him at once. That won't

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

be easy. But this is as much an emergency case as anything in the city."

"It's pretty bad there?"

"As bad as anything I've ever seen. We hope the water's reached its height. The thing now is to get relief work organized."

"I—is there anything I can do for my—my father?"

Norton shook his head promptly.

"No," he said. "He won't even know whether you're here or not. You ought to be in bed—but I suppose there's no use in my telling you to go there?"

"Not if there's any chance for me to be useful in town. Can't I go back with you?"

Norton looked at him.

"On the whole, I'm inclined to say, 'Yes,' " he said. "If I went by your physical condition—knowing what you've been through—I'd order you to bed. But—well, I've seen shock work this way before. You'd better keep busy. None of my business why—unless you want to talk?"

Hasbrook stared. Here was something that seemed to him uncanny. He was conscious of a wild impulse to blurt out the whole mad story. But he resisted it.

"I can't," he said. "Not now. You think we can get a nurse?"

"We'll put it up to Hanshew or Hudson. They're in charge of relief-work. Hanshew's saved us. I've heard hard things about that little man, and I've thought some myself. But he's saved this city today so far as any man could. The N. M. C. plant wasn't touched by the flood, you see. Hanshew got his whole crowd out at the start. They ripped out all sorts of material and started making flat-bottomed boats and carrying them to the water on their trucks. They saved thousands that way."

Here was a tonic infinitely more precious to Hasbrook than the pellets Norton took from a medicine-case he had brought with him. This commonplace, ordinary talk set him in the way of gathering his forces. He was beginning to see already that it was as Jim Graham that he must go on.

All of himself that men knew had vanished, was dead, forgotten. However this had come about, whoever he was, he must go among men who must, of necessity, hail and know him as Graham, his friend—who, in real truth, was dead. And then a curious thing happened. He wanted to make a note of this doctor's name and his address. And when he wrote them down he saw that it was Jim Graham's writing that appeared on the paper. Here was a bit of testimony, mute, trivial, that still carried with it a conviction appalling in its finality.

Norton gave final orders concerning John Graham and led the way to his car. It was dark when he and Hasbrook came to the outskirts of the great plant of the National Machine Company. At intervals they saw soldiers on guard.

"We're under martial law," explained Norton. "There's been some looting already. Queer thing, human nature!"

The city was still dark as a whole, but at the N. M. C. plant, which had its own dynamos, lights were strung everywhere. Tents appeared in vacant plots of ground.

"Let's find Hudson," said Norton. "He's really in charge, under Hanshew. I want to send that nurse back."

There was trouble in getting a nurse, but Jim Graham, it seemed, had influence, even in this hour of disaster. Hudson gave him a quick, crisp nod.

"Your father, Jim?" he said. "I'm sorry. We need him pretty badly now. Yes; I'll arrange for a nurse. We can't afford to lose him now. How about you?"

"I'm all right," said Jim. "Turn me loose any way you please."

"Good man! Take hold of this emergency ration-distribution. Two children count as one. There's powdered milk for the babies. You'll have to see about apportioning that."

"We're pretty well cut off?"

"Absolutely—to-night. There's not a line of railway open. We've hooked up one telephone-wire, though, and been in touch with the Red Cross and with army-corps headquarters. They have started food-trucks—there's a good chance that they'll be through by to-morrow."

Hasbrook turned away with a sense of immeasurable relief. Work—that was what he wanted, needed. Thought must come in time—but first there would be labor, and achievement, and the peace that they could bring to his troubled spirit struggling in its new integument of a dead man's flesh.

THOSE were breathless, crowded days in Lewistown. For Hasbrook, as for every man concerned in the multitudinous tasks that relief entailed—and that meant,

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

in effect, every able-bodied man in the city—there was little rest or sleep. Slowly, grudgingly, the waters receded. And the city, emerging from the shadow of ruin, reckoned up its losses.

The river had done its worst. It had swept away, in the city alone, a hundred lives or more. Through the valley, in smaller towns and cities, also, there had been a heavy toll.

Hasbrook volunteered, when Red Cross and army experts, coming in to help, had taken over his work of rationing, to gather men to dispose of the dead animals. Hudson welcomed his offer, stared at him curiously, though, as he did so.

"Yes; go to it," he said. "Not the sort of job I'd have expected you to ask for, though, Graham!"

It was not the sort of thing Jim Graham would have done. But Hasbrook knew that if he must be Jim Graham, Graham would, before the end came, surprise more people than Dirck Hudson.

What sleep he got during those first days he snatched on a cot at the N. M. C. plant. He ate when he found the time to stand up and swallow a cup of coffee and eat a sandwich. Never in his life had he worked so hard; never had he known a satisfaction so deep as that which came to him when he set fire to the last oil-soaked mound of carcases with which the worst danger of an epidemic was consumed.

With Canton Farms and the old man who lay there he kept in touch as well as he could. He saw Norton every day, and Norton, since Vermilyea, the Graham family doctor, was still unavailable, remained in charge of the case for three days. It was on the fourth day that Norton sent word to him that Colonel Graham was conscious and wished to see him.

FOR the first time since he had reported to Dirck Hudson, all life seemed unreal to him when that message came. The nurse, who met him at the door of Colonel Graham's room, detained him for a moment before he went in.

"Your father understands what is said to him, Mr. Graham," she said. "But he cannot speak himself. His mind is clear. He answers me by pressing my hand—once for 'Yes,' twice for 'No.'"

He went in alone. John Graham looked infinitely old and strangely shrunken. His face was distorted, but his eyes were as bright and as keen as they had ever been. He seemed to try to move his right hand as if in greeting.

"I'm frightfully sorry, sir," said Hasbrook. He was still conscious of that mingling of antagonism and fear that this pathetic and helpless old man had always roused in him. But he was ashamed of it; he waited, when he had spoken, as though John Graham could answer.

But then he realized that the whole burden of this interview rested upon him.

"I—I hate to trouble you, sir," he said then. "But—you remember—what I had to tell you? About—Jim—and I—my being—my not being him—" He felt the faintest pressure on the hand that lay under the old man's fingers. "It's an appalling situation," he went on. "Except for you, no living soul suspects the truth. I—I want to do whatever you want. I'm afraid it's useless and hopeless to explain. But I can disappear—go off somewhere." The pressure on his hand was strong now. And it was repeated emphatically in negation. "You—you want me to stay, sir? To—to try to take Jim's place?" There was a single pressure on his hand. "I've thought of that possibility. I suppose I knew Jim about as well as one man ever comes to know another. And since I've done so much of your law-work and his—and the Mioto Trust's—I've come to know your business pretty nearly as well as he did. But it's altogether a question of what you want—except that I'm afraid it must be decided now."

Again there came that signal of agreement. But there was doubt and a grave concern in Hasbrook's voice as he went on.

"It's not going to be simple," he said. "You see—you'll have to trust me absolutely. And you've never done that, sir, I think. I'll have to do what I think right. And I suppose I'll often do things you wouldn't do—and that Jim wouldn't have done. And yet, even so, I think they'll be things Jim wanted to do in his heart if he'd been free."

The question in John Graham's eyes was as eloquent as though his lips had voiced it.

"I—I loved Jim!" Hasbrook cried. "And I could see—oh, you loved him! I know that. But you choked him, too. You never

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

let him be free. Jim—" His voice broke. "I don't believe any one ever understood him as I did. The fine things he thought and hoped—the ideas he had! I can remember how we used to sit up at night, sometimes, when we were in college, talking. The things we were going to do—the dreams we had! And I—well, I came home, and failed, and kept on sliding down-hill until he took hold of me and pulled me up to go along with him. And I had the notion, in these last days, of carrying on for him—of trying to do what I know he wanted."

The blue eyes were wide open now. And in them there was a look so baleful, so malignant, that Hasbrook started back. The old man stared at him, held him.

"You still want me to carry on?" he said hesitatingly, after a moment. And John Graham signaled, "Yes." "Is there anything else I should say—anything I have forgotten?" The answer was negative. "Shall I go back to my work—Jim's work?" The cold hand answered, "Yes." "Good-by, then." He rose. "I'll do my best, sir."

John Graham closed his eyes. It was the only way that was left to him, perhaps, of withdrawing himself.

A curious awe was upon Hasbrook as he left the room. He faced the future; he knew that these few minutes had made it forever impossible for him to turn back to the past from which he was cut off now as no living man had ever been. The course of this strangest, this weirdest of adventures he could not foresee. But the issue was settled; he must go on.

THE extraordinary pressure of the relief-work served Hasbrook well in the days that followed his talk with John Graham. He had little time for thought. He had been Jim Graham's closest friend; it was relatively easy for him to make himself acquainted with such few details of the other's affairs as his personal papers revealed. His own affairs, Jim Hasbrook's, he could wind up naturally and easily; Graham would logically have done that had death come to Hasbrook in some ordinary way. He went to what had been his own apartment, destroyed letters and papers, paid bills, went through the routine of winding up an estate that, after all, came to little enough.

Yet it was greater than, a year or two before, would have seemed possible. He had spoken truly when he had said to John Graham that he, Jim Hasbrook, had been a failure until he had become a part of the tail of the rising kite of the Graham fortunes.

As to those fortunes, no revelations coming to him now had been needed to acquaint him with the most salient facts concerning them.

He himself had come back to Lewistown, after college and law school—a training Jim Graham had shared, although he had never intended to practise law after the first year of his course—to face the problems raised by his father's death. He had inherited a rapidly dying practise that had been unable to survive the changing ideals of a new generation.

It was Jim Graham who had come to the rescue. The rise of the Grahams was a new thing in Lewistown. In those early days, when the friendship between the two boys had been formed, when they had played and fought together, there had been no discrepancies of wealth between the families. Hasbrook's father had been a prosperous lawyer; Graham's a minor official in the Mioto Trust Company, just beginning to be regarded as a coming man.

But John Graham, slowly, at first, and then with an increasing momentum, had gone up and on while Mr. Hasbrook had receded from his place and seen younger lawyers, less able but also less scrupulous, forge past him. John Graham had come, after some years, into control of the Mioto Trust Company.

Conservative financial interests might look askance at the Grahams and the growing trust company that was the keystone of their power. Yet they made terms with him, dealt with him. There were rumors of strange company that the Grahams kept, of the financing of transactions uninviting to banks of the older line. But stock in the Mioto Trust was not for sale at any price; the Grahams figured in directorates here, there and everywhere.

Sheer want, weariness opened Hasbrook's ears to Graham's offers, led him, in the beginning, to accept those bits of business that Jim was able to turn his way. And a certain flashing keenness had attracted John Graham's attention to him, made it possible for him, ultimately, to

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

displace Benson & McQuade as counsel for the trust company and the whole Graham interest.

He had had to give up much to take the prosperity that came then. But had nursed as well as he could the idea that he was making sacrifices for his ideals, for the principles his father had handed down to him. Yet that had never fully satisfied him. For Graham, as he knew, had ideals and standards as high as his own. He had, perhaps, made compromises—but how were they to be avoided? And was it not the cry of every failure that he might have succeeded had he been willing to yield upon some point of honor?

LOOKING back, in those days when he was forced to readjust himself, Hasbrook could see the extraordinary difference that his acceptance of his friend's help had made. A single year had served to transform his life. He had moved from the old house to his comfortable apartment. He had bought a car; he could play golf, when he had time, at the country club; he had been elected to the Seneca Club, that citadel of Lewistown, where its leaders met each day for lunch. He had begun to be pointed out as a coming man. And all that had been necessary, beyond Jim Graham's friendship, which he had always had, had been a willingness on his part to be what Graham had called "practical."

Inevitably what he faced now was simply the projection of the problem that Jim Graham had forced him to solve before. To be practical. To take things as they came. That had been, in a sense, the creed Graham had preached to him. He had no real plans as yet; it was his good fortune that the moment was so crowded as to preclude the necessity of making them.

He found that the Graham house in town had been severely damaged. He placed it on the market, being satisfied that John Graham would never be able to leave Canton Farms, and, for the time, took up his quarters at the Seneca Club. And, with such decisions as had been forced upon him made, he plunged into tasks of a wider scope.

Lewistown, staggered in the beginning, was stirring with a new spirit. Rather was it an old spirit—the spirit of pioneer days, that had been a living flame when those of a generation almost forgotten had come through the wilderness and over the forest trails to this rich and fertile valley. They had struggled against poverty, against the forces of nature, carrying the torch of their civilization into the clearings that they made in the primeval forest.

A week, a day, before the flood Lewistown had been much like many another American city. It had been neither better nor worse than others; it had had a government functioning about as others did, matching its deserts, reflecting adequately such interest as most of those who lived in the city took in its affairs.

In the moment of disaster all the rottenness, all the pitiful, cheap, shoddy inefficiency of that rusty and outworn machine of government had been pitilessly exposed. In the crisis the municipal administration had altogether broken down—mayor, officials, police had shown themselves inept, stupid, helpless. But the city itself had cast up a man; it was as if he had been lifted and flung up on high by the very flood. And that was Hanshew, of the National Machine Company.

From the first the sheer force of his personality, his conviction of his own competence had bent lesser men to his will. A colonel of militia, leading his regiment to the rescue of the stricken city, had turned to him without question or hesitation; business men, contemptuous of the authorities, had looked to him for leadership, and found it.

It was the relief commission, headed by Hanshew, endowed by the governor of the state with some show of authority to sanction its usurpation of the powers of the city government, that organized the work of rehabilitation. Hanshew himself was the nerve-centre of the whole He had seemed old to Jim, before the flood. But he was like a man endowed with a new youth now. The demand upon all that he had of skill, of energy had fired him. He had risen, with a flaming gratitude, to the opportunity, so unlooked for, so far beyond his hopes, to prove again, as he had done in his youth for his own ends, his strength, his unmatchable competence in an emergency.

And, ten days after the flood, when other men, seeing daylight at last, a city restored to an extent that, in the beginning had seemed bound to be the work of months,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

were drawing long breaths with the sense of a task achieved, Hanshew rose at the nightly meeting of the leaders of the relief work, to speak. A small man, he was enormously impressive; he stood there, his glasses in his hand, his eyes protruding slightly.

"Well," he said. "We've saved the city. We've fought off famine and we've beaten the danger of an epidemic. We've even warded off a financial panic. You men have done great work. If we stopped now I think we could all feel we'd done a good job—that we could turn over what's left to the mayor and the aldermen and demand that they see it through. So—I think it's time we settled down to work."

There was a curious, staring silence. But through Jim there ran such a thrill as he had not known since his college-days.

"You see—as I reckon it, we haven't really started," Hanshew went on. "We've done about as much as a man does when he puts out a fire in his house or swims to shore when he's caught in a sinking boat in the middle of a river. We can't stop now.

"For all we know there may be as bad a flood as this next year. It's not likely—but we don't *know*. But we can control it if we will. We can contrive matters so that even a greater flood can do no harm. I think we must do that. I will entertain two motions: The first, that we of the relief commission be organized and incorporated as a Flood-Prevention Commission. The second, that the commission, when incorporated, shall proceed to retain the best engineering talent available to study the problem of prevention and shall raise one million dollars for expenses."

He stopped. Murmurs arose.

"He's crazy!" "We're milked dry for relief!" "A million! We couldn't get fifty thousand——"

"What's that? Wait!" The old rasp was back in Hanshew's voice. "Wait! Until this lesson's been forgotten? No! We must do it now.

"And—unless you want to let me down, it's too late to wait. I've retained engineers. I've pledged myself to pay them. They can find out now what happened, and how, and why. Six months from now it will be too late. My own subscription is fifty thousand dollars."

Slowly, then, a laugh spread through the room. Jim leaped up.

"I'm saying five thousand—to start!" he cried. "Who's next?"

Like a man calling a roll he named those who were there. Hanshew, frowning faintly, watched him, nodded his approval as man after man answered to his name.

"A hundred and forty thousand, sir!" he said, when he took his list to Hanshew.

"Good man! Stick round. I want to see you." He raised his voice. "Hudson? Calthorpe? Find him, some one. And Cartwright—Robertson—Schmitz—Jones——"

THE rest passed out. The few Hanshew had named remained. Jim glowed at being included among them.

"Some of you men don't like me," said Hanshew. "All right. I feel the same way about some of you. Just now—that can't count. Now—we've got our chance—a chance we'll never have again. We can turn Lewistown into such a city as Plato dreamed and wrote about. The past—Lord!—we've all made mistakes. We've been lazy, corrupt, selfish. Eh, well—let's wipe all that out. Where's Wainwright today? The man I helped to make mayor!"

Some one laughed. The mayor was a figure of tragic ridicule.

"We're not going back to that sort of misgovernment. We're going to take this job over from the politicians—as we've had to do in these ten days. Galveston did it—Dayton—half a dozen other towns. So can we. We can wipe out our nest of crooked politicians. Replace a dishonest ignoramus like Wainwright with a city manager who can be fired the minute he doesn't make good on his job.

"All we have to do is to organize opinion here in the city. The state law provides authority—if we vote for a commission government. And this is the time to make people choose. There's still time for a referendum this spring.

"Cartwright, if you're sold on this, get out and sell the merchants—from Adams down to the Greek who sells candy and soda. Robertson, we've fought, and I suppose we'll fight again. But here's one time I can deal with unions and union men. I count on you with organized labor. Schmitz—you're top dog among the manufacturers. Graham, I've picked you, instead

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

of Thorne, to bring the banks into line. I wouldn't have thought of you a week ago. But the Mioto's tied up with the building trades—you'll have to take the lead in financing rebuilding."

Swiftly Hanshew fell upon details, flung out orders, suggestions, requests. He played on the minds of the men. And Jim, for one, when he walked out later with Robertson, secretary of the Federated Unions, was in a white heat of enthusiasm and loyalty.

THROUGH all those early days of work Jim was harassed by the thought of Margaret Thorne. He told himself that he had not the time to undertake the task of enlightening her. And yet he knew that here, and in this alone, he was evading his duty.

Her silence puzzled him; that she had not sought, at once, some word, some assurance, from the man she loved was a strange thing. Yet he knew her well enough to understand that she would want duty to come first. And her very silence called him to her imperatively. Excuses were falling away. At Canton Farms John Graham lay, grim and still. He was better. He would live—what change there might be ultimately, none could say.

Jim went to Margaret at last on a warm evening in early April. It was dark, but on the porch he saw a figure, dressed in white. He called her name uncertainly. And she rose.

"Jim?" she said. "Is it you? I'm glad you have come to me——"

She held out her hand, and he took it, wondering, confused. It was not so that he had looked for her to greet him—to greet Jim Graham, rather.

"I should have come before," he said. He hesitated. "There is something I must tell you——"

"Jim! I've never seen you like this——"

"I!" He cried out. "Margaret—it's not—I'm not Jim—your Jim! Can you understand? I'm Jim Hasbrook—" He saw her shrink away. "I'm not mad," he said slowly. He framed each word distinctly. "I wonder that I'm not. But, Margaret, what I'm telling you is so. It's past all understanding of mine. I nearly killed my—Jim's father when I had to tell him."

"Tell me," she said. "I'll try to understand——"

He caught his breath in wonder, admiration, gratitude. For she was quiet; there was a strange and mysterious note of acceptance and belief in her voice. Slowly at first, and then with a rising passion, he told her all.

"What happened only God knows," he said at the end. "Whatever it was, it's happening still. I'm changing. I'm growing more like—like him. And yet, he—I—whatever—whoever I am—is coming, too, to be as I was—no; as I wanted to be, I think.

"Margaret — there's fate—there's the hand of some power that's beyond thought or comprehension in this thing. I—I feel that it's for me to take all that was decent in us and bring it to some sort of realization—" A long sigh shook her. "Margaret," he cried, "I'm a brute—I haven't thought of you——"

"Wait!" she said. "Jim, I knew the moment you came that something strange had happened. But this—we—there aren't words—are there?—for a thing that's so utterly outside of all experience. Yet I knew—something—felt it——"

"I think that is because we both loved you," he said very simply. "You—you chose him, Margaret. But it never made any difference—between him and me—or to my loving you. That had to be."

"I wonder," she said. "I—yes; I sent you away—I sent Jim Hasbrook away."

"You told me why," he said. "You told me why you were choosing him instead of me. You told me that he might be great, either for good or evil—that you could imagine him as a great king, and me as his minister, executing his will."

"Yes," she said.

"It wasn't so—not quite. But there was a difference. It wasn't that I couldn't think greatly. I could—as well as he. Better, sometimes—farther, at least. But he could ride roughshod over the world and fate. And I couldn't. He acted while I thought—split hairs—and lost my chance.

"But now, you see—it seems to me—oh, Margaret—it seems to me that all that both of us could do I can do now! I've got my vision and his—whatever it was. I used to be afraid to face the truth. He never was. I think he thought he could defy the things that compromising with what he knew was right must do to him. I don't know what

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Graham reached back and caught his sleeve. "Man—you're crazy! What good can you do—jumping out? You couldn't get to the house, anyway, against this current."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

I thought—when I sold out—when I hired myself to him and to his father to do dirty work for the comforts I couldn't earn while I stayed honest——"

She cried out in protest. But her cry died on her lips.

"Yes," she said. "I—I suppose I knew that. But—oh, I wanted so to keep my faith in him!"

"Margaret! I—I've been forgetting—now! What I've never stopped thinking of since I first realized the truth—you loving him—and this—I—coming in his very look——"

"You—oh, you don't know!" she said. "You couldn't. Jim— That—that ends all doubt. I don't think I've quite realized that it's true till now."

"What do you mean?"

"That night," she said. "The very night he—the night of the flood—I had to send him away. To tell him I had been wrong. That I couldn't marry him. Jim, I hated him—all at once—that night—I—Jim, this—this is so terrible! I told him I had been wrong—in choosing him!"

"Margaret! Then I—you found you cared for——"

Her hands were spread out before her, barring him from her. But there was light enough for him to see the horror, the aversion in her eyes.

"THIS won't do," Jim Hasbrook said. "Margaret—I can't have you look at me like that. You—you needn't——"

"Oh!" she cried. "This is so terrible! Why should it have happened to us?"

"We can't know that," he said soberly. "We've got to fix our minds on what is."

"Yes," she said. "I suppose what we've got to do is to try to stop understanding; isn't it? Because we can't do that—we can't hope to do that!"

"I've gone nearly mad," he said. "You see, no one has known except Colonel Graham. I told him. It's been the most frightful thing, having people—every one—just take it for granted that things were as they seemed. I nearly blurted the whole thing out right in the beginning—to the doctor we got when the colonel had his stroke—a chap called Norton."

"I know him," said Margaret. "Steve Norton. That's very strange, Jim—that you should have got hold of him. Do you know, I wish you had told him? He's awfully wise and he isn't just a physician. He's had some remarkable success with queer nervous cases."

Jim shied from the phrase.

"I'm not a case!" he said angrily. "I'm—oh, God knows what I am! Sometimes I think this whole thing is just a delusion, that the shock did something queer to me—mixed me all up. And still—no; there's more than that in it. I know what I've got to do. I've got Jim Graham's cards to play—and I'm going to play them."

She turned from him and sat down.

"I'm sorry, Jim," she said. "I—I'm frightfully upset."

"I haven't thought much of you," he said contritely. "I've been an awful brute, Margaret. And yet I've thought about you a lot, too. If I'd known about you—about that night——"

She shuddered.

"Jim, I'm going to get over it. But you've got to give me time. I—I don't want to look at you yet. Listening to you—that doesn't seem so bad, somehow. But—I'd been so wretchedly unhappy."

He winced. But he managed to smile.

"Look here," he said; "Margaret, this is going to be easier if we have it out. I—well, I love you. I can't think of any time when I didn't love you. And I think that was true of him, too. We knew about one another pretty well—we knew some things we didn't have to talk about. And this—it hasn't made any difference, of course."

"I—I know. Jim, it's so awful——"

"Let's not make it any worse than it is," he said. "I—well, I rather hope you're going to be able to tell me what went wrong—what made you do what you did that night of the flood. But, anyway, even without knowing I can see that things must have been frightfully hard for you. And I can understand how you'd feel about—well, any one you'd cared for, or thought you'd cared for, and then found you didn't——"

She made some sound, and he stopped, and waited. But she only looked at him, and then turned away.

"We've got to talk now," he said. "But we needn't again. Not if we say everything now. Just now—when you told me—oh, I suppose it was human for me to feel—to think—well, what you saw I did. I—I

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

couldn't tell you what it meant to me when you chose him. And when you told me that you'd been wrong—oh, I suppose I was happier just for a second than I'd ever been in my life. But I understand, Margaret. I can promise you that I'll not ask for anything—except just that you'll let me see you. I—I don't want to whine, Margaret, but I'm going to need you about as badly as one human being ever needed another."

She turned to him again then.

"You don't suppose I'd shirk?" she said. "Oh, Jim—I hate myself for the way I feel, but I can't help it. And so long as you understand, it is better. I wanted to say all that—but I couldn't."

"That's all right, then," he said. "You know—it seems to me that we ought to try to have all this out now. And then go on from a sort of new start."

"Yes," she said doubtfully; "but it's not easy to see how."

"We've got to take this for granted, Margaret: I'm Jim Graham. I can't be any one else. And I've got to think of myself that way. With just this difference: that all the mistakes I—or he—ever made are wiped out and I've begun to write on a clean slate. You see, I can't help feeling that there's some big reason for what's happened, and that I've got to make good."

"Oh, yes!" she said. "Jim, that's the one great thing about it—isn't it?—the tremendous chance it gives you."

"Yes," he said soberly. "There have been plenty of mistakes, Margaret. They both made them—Jim Graham and Jim Hasbrook. And they're both gone, since the night of the flood, with their mistakes and their weaknesses and their—well, their sins. What I've got to do is to run straight from now on. I'll be tempted! O, Lord—I know that! And—when it comes to temptation — well—" He hesitated. "I don't want to keep coming back to something that can only hurt you and bother you. And still—I've got to tell you——"

"Go on," she said.

"It was just to-night," he said, "when I was coming here. It hadn't come to me before. But, Margaret, I thought of you, and that unless I told you you couldn't know—and—" He stopped and laughed harshly. "There you are!" he said. "I could have that idea. It shows me what I've got to fight—inside as well as out. It wouldn't have worked, as it happens. But I didn't know that——"

"I don't believe you had to fight that temptation very hard," she said. "You had to tell me, of course. And still—some things will be hard. I can see that. I think—" It was her turn to hesitate. "You said you hoped I'd tell you why I—why I sent you—him—away that night. I think, chiefly, I was afraid. Not of anything in particular—but of something that was going on in him—some change. I'd been seeing that for a long time.

"It's awfully hard to say what's in my mind. It wasn't anything he did or could do that mattered to me so much—it was why and how he did things. I could forgive—that's not just the word, but it's the nearest I can think of—even something that people would call 'wicked' or 'criminal' if he did it strongly and bravely. But I couldn't stand having him do it because of pressure that was put on him. I could stand selfishness and greed—but I couldn't bear fear. Oh, this is awfully mixed up——"

"I think I see what you mean, though," he said. "A man can go wrong positively or negatively—and do exactly the same rotten thing. But you can respect the one, even if you don't like it, and despise the other." He laughed. "You know, I've got that queer, impersonal feeling about those two. That used to be the difference between them. Hasbrook could always see the right thing to do and circumstances kept him from doing it. And Graham did what he wanted, regardless of circumstances. I think that's what I was trying to tell Colonel Graham. It was the colonel who was breaking him——"

"I think I felt that," said Margaret. "It all came to a head that night, but that was just chance. I'd known for a long time, and I think he had, too, that something was wrong. That's about all I can tell you."

"It's enough," he said, and stood up. "I'm going now. But I'm coming back—often, if you'll let me."

"Of course," she said. "I want you to, Jim. As long as we both understand, everything's all right. I want to help."

THE sheer pressure of routine work settled upon Jim Graham now. He had no time to brood upon his situation. He was head of the Mioto Trust Company

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

in John Graham's continued absence, and there alone there was work enough to take all of a man's ordinary working-day.

But he had much more than routine work to do. He had to delve deeply into matters that had, in the past, been known only to John Graham. He came upon things that astonished him. He had known, of course, much of the business that had been done and the methods that had been pursued—as much, certainly, as Jim Graham in his proper person. What he was learning now was that John Graham had trusted no one completely—not even his own son.

The Mioto Trust Company had been both the center and the cloak of a conspiracy that had spread out over the whole Mioto Valley. Operations that had been begun, in a tentative and hesitating way, even before the war, had had a mushroom growth since then. When other men and other financial institutions had given themselves more or less whole-heartedly to patriotic service, John Graham and the trust company that was, in effect, his private property, had been consistent in the promotion of their own interests.

There had been a well-planned and irresistible campaign to concentrate in a few hands all the essential factors of the business of building in the Mioto Valley. And, as matters now stood, the Graham control of all building-materials available for use within the valley was complete. Those who did not wish to yield tribute could, of course, buy in distant markets; but Jim came upon hints of understandings with other rings, fixed in a similar control of those markets, that showed how illusory such a hope must have been.

Moreover, there had been always the Mioto Trust, ready and able to finance any building-operation—on its own terms. Throughout the war, John Graham had been able to evade war-time restrictions upon loans; he had been prepared, afterward, to lend. The imminence of hard times had not affected his reservoir of money.

And so a situation had risen in which those who wanted to build found themselves, if they needed money, obliged to go to John Graham. They got their loans. But sometimes they had to borrow more than they needed—and invest the surplus in land they didn't want, which was held either by Graham personally or the trust company. Sometimes they had to pay a bonus outright, or sign notes that were discounted at astonishingly low figures. And always they understood that they must employ approved contractors, buy their materials from restricted markets, reach understandings with certain labor leaders whose power over the unions they represented seemed to be without limit.

The deeper Jim got into his examination of what had been going on the more the disappearance of the agreement that had brought about the trip to the vault on the night of the flood disturbed and worried him. By itself it was bad enough. In conjunction with what he had learned and what, of course, others must know, it would be enough to wreck the whole structure of the Graham fortunes and the Mioto Trust Company—what was honest and good with what was dishonest and corrupt.

The agreement itself was one of those documents that men banded together for illicit purposes, having no faith in one another, sign that each side may have some hold upon the other. It dealt with only one phase of the business; it concerned the rotation of contracts among the members of the contracting ring. But it was clear evidence of conspiracy. In the event of a fight and of an investigation, it would be as dangerous as dynamite.

SUCH a fight was coming. Jim, indeed, meant to and must precipitate it sooner or later. For in the time that lay ahead, the time of rebuilding and reconstruction, of repair of the damage the flood had done, such a ring as the Grahams had fastened upon the valley would have its greatest opportunity. And to let it go on, would be to shatter the golden chance of freeing the whole valley from the bonds of traditional acceptance of greed as a ruling motive in the acts of men.

Fairfield, the engineer Hanshew had retained, was at work now; his men were flung out through the whole valley, running lines, making accurate records of high-water marks, studying the flood-courses of streams that would before long be no more than dry gullies. And already, in the informal meetings of Hanshew's commission, there was talk of the remedy the engineer would propose.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

This Fairfield was a quiet man, an imaginative genius, a breaker of precedent. And long before his studies were complete, long before his professional caution would permit him to declare his conclusions, he knew, and had, without quite knowing it, told Hanshew and a few more what must be done.

No half-measures would serve; that much was sure. Lewistown could dredge the river within its own limits, strengthen the levee, clear out obstructions in the stream, alter bridges and railway embankments. But everything like that that could be done, said Fairfield, had it been done before this last flood, would have delayed the catastrophe by, perhaps, six hours. It came to this, then: Miles from where the Mioto had wrought its worst havoc, its flood-waters must henceforth be caught and held. And his first guess of the cost of such an enterprize played with the sum of thirty million dollars.

"Where's your authority?" asked Jim, when that talk was heard first. "It's beyond any city limits—it sounds to me as if this thing would cross half a dozen county-lines. It sounds right—but impossible."

"Nothing's impossible," said Hanshew. "We found that out after the flood. If there's no authority now, we'll get it from the legislature. We'll have the governor on our side."

Fairfield had smiled rather wearily.

"Oh, I don't expect to bring this off," he said. "I'm not a politician. I'll tell you what you ought to do. If you can't do it—well, that won't be my fault. But it would be my fault if I told you you were secure from another flood unless you actually were. You can be—I know that much."

"Then we will be," said Hanshew, as though that must be an end of doubt and argument. And, for Jim, it was a warning that his own problem was imminent.

Almost against his will, now, Jim was taken more and more, into Fairfield's confidence. He was a specialist in land-values through the valley, and Fairfield's plan, undeveloped though it was as yet, was going to involve great purchases of land.

"I'm always being called a visionary," Fairfield told Jim. "People laugh at me and say I ask for the impossible. That isn't so. Take this business here for example. I'm prepared to do everything I can to cut costs. You've got to help me there, because the land we'll have to acquire is going to be a tremendous item."

"Condemnation—whatever organization's worked out will have eminent domain; won't it?" suggested Jim.

Fairfield laughed the laugh of ripe experience.

"Condemnation commissioners to be paid!" he said. "Logs rolling here and there—back and forth. Man alive, you save money by letting the worst robber out of jail hold you up instead of waiting to condemn! No. My idea is to work you in on all our land-buying—use your local knowledge. I'll lay out ideal sites first—I've told you enough already for you to know my plan calls for retaining basins.

"But while those will be the best sites, they won't be the only ones. The chances are we'll have two or three alternatives for each dam. That may not hold, but it should. There'll be two things to do. Keep our decisions secret, stop leaks. That's the first. Then there'll be quick work in getting options. Oh, I know human nature! We'll be up against speculation and the use of official knowledge for private gain. But that's all in the game."

"I'll do my best," Jim said.

But it seemed to him that the shadow of the old man at Canton Farms lay across his path, sinister and menacing.

IN THE beginning, Jim had held his place in the relief-work because Hanshew was behind him. He had been conscious of distrust of him among many of those with whom he had had to work, had been able to conquer a resentment natural and instinctive because he understood so well the causes of that lurking distrust and dislike.

Considered as he had to consider it, that feeling was an asset. It was even more stimulating than Hanshew's swift and approving appraisal of him had been. These others—Dirck Hudson, men who had been leaders of Lewistown life—had fought shy of the Grahams, father and son, in the past. They had swallowed their dislike when it came to business, but they had been suspicious, alert against treachery and surprise.

Already, now, Jim could feel that he was giving these men food for thought. He was arresting their attention, making them wonder about him. Their feeling of instinctive

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

distrust remained; it seemed to him, though, that it was already tempered, and that the dislike that had once accompanied it was waning. And here he had a very exact measure of the progress of his accomplishment of a task unique and extraordinary.

What he had, in effect, to do was this: He had to build upon the rotten foundations of all Jim Graham's years a reputation and a life such as could command the respect of others as well as of himself. Here was a thing infinitely difficult and yet, at the same time, infinitely worth while.

There were times when he rebelled, when it seemed to him that the demand upon him was one bitterly and cruelly unjust. And those times came, as a rule, when he was, or had been, with Margaret. It was then that the measure of the payment he must make was clear to him, when, at some instinctive movement of his, some thoughtless word or gesture, he saw that look of aversion, of fear spring into her eyes.

He went to Canton Farms to see John Graham often enough to make it seem that he was doing his full duty. That, frankly, was his ruling thought. John Graham, lying still, his face twisted, his eyes staring out blankly, was a figure both sinister and depressing. There was some improvement in his condition. He had learned by now to write upon a pad. But he made no use of his power when Jim was there—lay still and listened, used his hand for gestures that meant acquiescence rather than agreement.

Curious feelings he found it difficult to analyze or to understand beset Jim during those brief interviews. He feared John Graham; in a way, he felt, he disliked him. Yet he felt that between him and the old man on the bed there was some bond subtle and tenuous, and yet — unbreakable.

Another thing haunted him: the conviction that, helpless though he was, John Graham still held some power, mysterious and invisible, over him. It angered him to feel so, shook his new confidence in himself and his own strength. Yet he could never for very long conquer his feeling. But he would not give way to it, would modify in no way the course he was pursuing.

And that was beginning definitely, as Fairfield's project came to be more and more a matter of common, general talk, to bring Jim into conflict with those forces he must either yield to or subdue.

Just at first, in the confusion and hurry of the work of temporary patchwork reconstruction, even graft had been forgotten—crooked contractor and venial laborman alike had done their best to meet the situation. But with the passing of the crisis the old tendencies had reappeared. Mysterious telephone messages had come to Jim, urging delay in the granting of certain loans, and the naming of conditions; unsigned letters had conveyed similar requests. He could identify both callers and writers; the cloak of anonymity had not been assumed to deceive him, of course.

THE first open attack—the first encounter of the war, so to speak—came with John Clark's application for a loan. Clark headed—owned, indeed—the Mioto Plow Works, was not and never had been a customer of the Mioto Trust. The flood had hit him hard. He wanted two hundred thousand dollars—and Jim knew, a week before Clark's card was brought to him one morning, that he was coming.

Clark came in, nodded curtly, stood uncompromisingly by the side of Jim's desk.

"I sha'n't be here long enough to need to sit down, I guess," he said. "I want two hundred thousand. You know what for. Say 'No' and let me go back to Hanshew and tell him that I told him so."

"I don't expect to say 'No,'" Jim answered quietly. "But I can't say 'Yes' until I've gone into the whole matter with you, Mr. Clark. So you'd better change your mind and sit down."

Clark stared, laughed then, with an ugly, sneering note in his laughter.

"I'll not deal with Flood," he said. "My contracts are ready for signature—with the Ellisons, of Pittsburgh. I place my business where I choose—not where you say."

"Mr. Clark"—Jim's voice was cold and level—"in this case this loan, if it's made, will be handled by the Second National, I take it, not by my bank. You're not our customer. As it happens, that makes no difference just now. If I approve this loan we'll make it—if Thorne can't or doesn't want to. And I'll approve it or reject it simply on its merits. You can take your contract to London or Cape Town for all I care—provided that what you want to do is

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

entitled to emergency classification under present conditions here. Sit down."

He didn't smile. Clark, hesitating a moment, searched his face with his eyes. Then he sat down. He grunted as he did so and laid down some papers.

"There are my statements," he said.

Jim ran through the papers, made notes as he did so.

"You'll need forty thousand now," he said, "and the rest as your payments to your contractors fall due. If you can get your building ready in time, you ought to be able to get some bills discounted and cut this down a bit—to your own advantage. Had you thought of rearranging this work so as to swing units into production as they're ready? I'm not familiar with your plant, but it's been done, and the N. M. C. people can help you. Their efficiency men and their production managers are available in all this reconstruction work——"

"I guess I know my own plant and how to run it." Clark was bristling.

"Oh, suit yourself!" said Jim. "You're entitled to the loan, and you're good for it. If you want to make this cost you more than it need it's your own affair. I'll O.K. your application. If you have any trouble with Thorne let me know and I'll see that you're fixed up."

He pushed the papers back across the desk, leaned back in his chair then, and grinned.

Clark was on his feet, fingering his papers doubtfully, looking with dislike at Jim's initialed approval scrawled across one sheet.

"There's a catch in this somewhere, young Graham," he said. "Your father——"

"He isn't here, and I don't believe that he'll be back," said Jim. "So——"

Clark shook his head doggedly.

"We'll see," he said, and went out, dour and ungracious—a vastly puzzled man.

Jim sat, smiling. Within five minutes another caller was announced. And this time it was Martin Flood, leader of the contractors allied with the Grahams—signer of that agreement Jim Graham would have given much to have under his hand.

FLOOD came in breezily, gripped Jim's hand, offered a cigar, sat down without an invitation.

"Hooked Clark, did you?" he asked.

"I don't know that I get you, Marty," said Jim amiably.

"Time's called, Jim!" said Flood. "Don't come the baby-stare over me. It won't work. Got my message, didn't you?"

"I thought they might be from you."

"Well? Put it up to him; didn't you?"

"What?"

"What he had to do to get his money?" Flood's big body began to shake with laughter. "Jim, I didn't get it at first. But I held the boys off just the same for old-times' sake. And then I began to see what you were after. Right you were, too! No use shaking down the little fellows and getting in bad for a grand or two. Not with this committee of yours fixing it so's the big boys like Clark would have to come to time. You're deep, Jim—deeper than the old colonel ever gave you credit for being!"

"I'm gratified, Mart," Jim said. "But I don't know that I deserve all these compliments. And you're a bit cryptic. Meaning that I don't get you."

Flood stared.

"Get this, then!" he said, with a sudden show of anger. "You had your orders. Did you tell Clark he'd have to bring me his job before he could get his money? There's a plain question for you!"

"Good!" said Jim. "Here's a plain answer. No."

"That don't go! We been patient with you since you've been running things. That's me, mostly. I've held the others off. But where do you think you get off—pulling stuff like this? What's the idea?" Jim gave him a long, cool stare. "You know the understanding. Well——"

"I know there was an understanding," Jim interrupted. "It's canceled—gone—done. Get that, Mart?"

"Is that so?" Flood sat still a moment, staring, thinking. "Going to pass us up, eh? Got in with Hanshew and the high-toned bunch? See a chance to do better—huh?"

"I don't think you'd understand the idea, even if I tried to explain," said Jim. "So—if you've nothing more to say—I'm really pretty busy, Mart."

"I've got something more to say, all right! Maybe I know more than you think I do. Where's that Number Two agreement?" He flung the question in the manner of a man firing a shot from a pistol

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

held within his pocket. But he followed question with answer on the instant. "You don't know—and I do," he said. "Look!" He laid a paper down on the desk. "There's a copy of it. Handle it—keep it, if you like. And remember—I know where the original is."

Curious, Jim picked up the paper. There was no doubt about it. Here was a true copy of that infinitely dangerous and secret document that had cost so much on the night of the flood. How had Flood come by this? There had been no copy in the beginning; he could swear to that.

He looked at the familiar phrases, the typewritten list of signatures. Then he pushed it back.

"Well?" he said. "This is canceled with the rest, Mart. You know it was never binding legally, of course."

"It's binding, though, all right," said Flood. "I know what's coming, Jim. There'll be a time when that paper in the wrong hands can break you. Better be good."

Jim laughed.

"That's old stuff—cheap stuff, too, Mart," he said. "I thought better of you—trying to blackmail me! Put it that you're right—what'll using it do to you?"

"Maybe there's a way of using it that hasn't come to you yet," said Flood. "It will! Suit yourself, Jim. I'll give you all the rope I can—for the old colonel's sake. We'll let this matter of John Clark and his loan go by. But from now on you'll have to toe the line——"

"That's all!" said Jim. "Better get out, Mart. I'd hate to have to throw you out."

Flood stood up, stared at him. Then he turned to the door, and, as he opened it, he laughed.

FOR Jim, it was no laughing matter—this declaration of war by Flood. He sat, frowning, staring at the copy of the agreement that Flood, contemptuously, had refused to take away. He read it through, tore it until it was in small fragments.

How had Flood come by that paper? He was certain that there had been, in the beginning, no copy of that dangerous and incriminating document, that the replica of it that he had just destroyed had been made recently.

The problem ate into his peace, into his ability to work, weighed upon his nerves. He went back to his office after lunch, reached the door and then turned, with a short, impatient laugh. He wanted to see Margaret; as always, when he was in trouble or perplexity, he needed her clear, cool judgment. He got his roadster and drove out to her place.

She wasn't home, and no one knew just where he might find her. He thought of the club, but then he laughed at himself, and gave up the idea of pursuing her. The ride had done him good. And he need not waste his time entirely; he decided, since he was so near, to stop at Canton Farms and pay one of his duty visits to John Graham.

He went there later in the day as a rule, and no one was about when he entered the house, walked up-stairs and into the room next to John Graham's, which was the nurse's. It was empty, and after hesitating just a moment he walked into the sick-room. A man was sitting by John Graham's bed. He jumped up, startled, and Jim stood, staring. The visitor was Oscar Kuser—next to Flood himself the man Jim feared most of the old crooked ring.

"Hello!" said Jim. Enlightenment had come to him in one blinding flash—odd that he had never thought of this most obvious of all solutions of his mystery!

"Hello!" said Kuser. "Old gentleman looks great—have him about again in no time if he keeps on like this."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Jim. He grinned. "Guess I'm a pretty poor substitute for him with you fellows—what? Flood was in to see me this morning."

His eyes were fixed on Kuser as he said this, and he saw what he was looking for—evidence that Kuser knew all about what had happened at the bank that morning. And that meant that John Graham knew it, too. Many things were clear now.

"You do look better. Kuser's right," he said, standing close by the bed and looking down at the old man.

Jim could almost believe that he saw a look of malicious enjoyment in the blue eye. After all, something was to be said for the position John Graham held in this queer game that was developing. And Jim had had proof that morning that John Graham, for all his helplessness, could take a hand himself.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Kuser was moving restlessly. But Jim checked him.

"Don't go," he said. "I only stopped in for a minute."

And he went out. He met the day nurse outside.

"Does Mr. Kuser come often?" he asked carelessly.

"Oh, yes," she said. "Either he or Mr. Flood comes every day. It seems to do Mr. Graham so much good to see them."

"I see," said Jim and meant that literally.

So, when Flood had declared war that morning, he had spoken not for himself and his allies alone but for John Graham, too.

For a little space, as he drove back to town, Jim was weighed down by a black depression such as he had not known since the full realization of how he stood and must stand with Margaret Thorne had come to him.

For it seemed to him that the odds against him were too heavy, that to go on as he had meant to do was to risk more than any man could be asked to stake upon an issue, no matter how great it might be.

He wanted passionately to serve this new city that was rising out of the waste spaces the flood had left behind. It was taking form fast, that new and greater Lewistown. To the clumsy system of mayor and councilmen there had succeeded a commission of three men—a city manager; administrative officers employed, not elected, dependent for their jobs upon making good, like the employees of any business.

So far it was good—in washing out the political hacks from the city hall the flood had atoned for half the other mischief it had wrought, at least. But there was so much more to do. Fairfield was nearly ready to report; already it was certain that some scheme of flood-prevention must go through. And the old gangs were raising their heads, scenting in this new work an opportunity for graft and private advantage such as nothing in the city's past had ever offered on so grand a scale.

He wanted to have his part in beating them, in making this work that was to be done a monument to civic decency and honesty of public service. But could he? Had he a chance—with Flood against him—and all that Flood stood for? With weapons in the hands of his enemies that could be used to discredit him?

He wondered whether he had the right to go on—whether it would not be a braver thing to quit, even now, letting it be assumed that he shirked the work involved. For later, if he stood by the work he had begun, his own ruin might affect the work, might affect the whole outcome of an enterprise greater than himself.

But, then, suddenly, he shook his head defiantly.

For it seemed to him that he was in danger of succumbing to just such forces as had, before the flood, made a wreck of the lives of Jim Graham and Jim Hasbrook both. For what he was allowing himself to contemplate was, in effect, nothing but a compromise, and one dictated to him by fear. Fear of Flood and Kuser and their ring, fear of the power of the old man who lay behind him at Canton Farms.

Upon Jim Graham, that Jim Graham who had ceased to be on the night of the flood, those people had, and might still have, some hold. Well then—it was for him to shake it off—to free the Jim Graham of to-day, body and soul, from fear and hold alike. And what he saw was that he could do that—could do it if he were resolute, if, without fear of consequence, he did what he knew it must be right for him to do.

He was laughing when he reached the bank and parked his car and went in.

HE FOUND a message from Fairfield on his desk; the engineer was coming to call for him that afternoon, and go with him to the meeting of the Flood Commission at Hanshew's office. And: "I'll be ready with my report. I want to talk to you about it first," Fairfield had added.

That message was the last spur Jim Graham needed. Within ten minutes he had set forces in motion that made a revolution in the state of his personal affairs.

His control of the Graham fortunes was practically absolute. It had been unnecessary for him to secure signatures from John Graham, since father and son had long since executed powers of attorney, each in the other's favor.

Armed thus for some time, he had been quietly withdrawing the Graham money from certain investments of long standing and turning them into assets easily to be

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Jim met the day nurse outside. "Does Mr. Kuser come often?" he asked carelessly. "Oh, yes," she said. "Either he or Mr. Flood comes every day. It seems to do Mr. Graham so much good to see them."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

liquidated or into actual cash. So far as he could, he now had taken the further step, extreme indeed, of transferring John Graham's money and negotiable securities to himself.

There was no one to question him, no one, he hoped—although of this he could not now be so sure—to carry word of what he was doing to Flood and to Canton Farms. But he had to take that risk; as matters stood he saw no way in which John Graham, with the best will in the world, could balk him. And when Fairfield came he was ready, went out with him at once.

"We've half an hour," said the engineer. "Drive me round a bit. I want to talk where we can't be heard."

"Right!" said Jim.

"You know the situation pretty well," said Fairfield. "I haven't changed my ideas much since the first. What's to be done is to impound flood-waters and let them into the main stream slowly, a little at a time. If my plan goes through, we'll build our dams with open gates, so that a regulated flow will always go through. Speaking roughly, I'll dam the big tributaries near their mouths. We've got to have a Conservancy District for the work—taking in parts of six or seven counties. The cost ought to be assessed according to benefits—and we can reckon those from the tables of damages of the big flood. Bonds can be floated—the cost can be spread over thirty or forty years, I should think.

"Until I get real estate figures, I can't make a cost-estimate worth the paper it's written on. I can estimate construction-cost pretty closely. I'm planning earthen dams—I want to try out a new hydraulic method that ought to be cheap, and I'd rather have earth than concrete. Now what I want you for——"

"Been wondering where I came in!" said Jim.

"As it stands, there's no authority to buy or get options on a foot of ground. But the ground's the heart of the business. If we run into hold-ups there, the costs can be rocketed so high that the thing will never go through. If you can swing that—in advance of the creation of a Conservancy District—well, you'll earn a monument. You know Mioto Valley real estate better than any one we've got. Can you?"

Jim was still for a moment.

"Can try—will try," he said; then, soberly: "It's a big thing, Fairfield, but I've seen it coming, and I've been laying some lines. You talked of leeway on dam-sites. Does that go?"

"To some extent. I'll go into that with you to-night. Understand me. I trust you. And I trust Hanshew and Hudson, I guess. As for the others—no!"

Jim nodded in reluctant agreement.

"Afraid you're right," he said. "There's awful big money loose in this project."

Fairfield looked at his watch.

"All right," he said; "time to go to Hanshew's. Keep your eyes open—and your ears. And—I suppose I needn't say, your mouth shut?"

Jim just grinned for answer. And they drove out to the N. M. C. plant. A dozen men were there—Hanshew himself, and representatives from other cities in the valley.

FAIRFIELD spoke briefly, but what he said was to the point. The Mioto could be curbed. He told them how—told them, too, the authority the legislature must give.

"I'm through—for the present," he said; then, "It's up to you gentlemen now."

Hanshew looked about.

"I've known some of this," he said. "I've had a bill drawn, with Fairfield's cooperation, creating a Conservancy District, organized like a corporation. I've talked to the governor—he's with us, but he's afraid of the rural vote. He says we'll have to give the counties higher up a real voice. However, I'll hand you copies of the bill as drawn."

He waited while multigraphed drafts of the bill were handed round and read. A hum of talk broke out; Jim caught a phrase:

"Chance of water-power development—through those dams—"

Even here—where, if anywhere, the public spirit of the whole valley was caught and impounded! He glanced at Fairfield; saw that he was smiling. Hanshew rapped on his desk.

"Are you ready? We have to pass upon this plan—and upon the bill. It will be introduced to-morrow if we approve—with the governor behind it to hasten its passage. If one of you will make a motion——"

Steam-roller tactics! But Jim grinned.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Hanshew knew his men, knew, too, how sure was the passage of that bill through a legislature that would never dare say 'No' to anything the combined power of the men in that room demanded of it. He was free to go out with Fairfield ten minutes later. And even Fairfield was impressed by that demonstration of Hanshew's power.

"Well?" he said.

"I'm going to disappear," Jim said. "Give me three days. But, first, I want the absolute inside dope on your dam-sites. I've been studying your maps. Here—aren't these your obvious sites?"

He had stopped his car, and now he named five places. Fairfield nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Those are the ones I'd like. But we can use these in their place." And he named four others. "Bear Creek—well, we've got to have that."

"I hope you can have the whole five as you want them," said Jim. "Now, listen to me; loosen up—talk freely—comparatively—about your sites to the men on the commission. Let them think they're pumping you."

"And give them my second-choice sites?"

"No. Your first. Only in hints, though. Don't say anything you can't squirm out of. Oh, I know—you don't like it. But you've got to fight fire with fire."

"All right," said Fairfield. "Hanged if I see what you're driving at, though."

"You needn't—yet."

JIM went to Chicago that night, and was back in the upper end of the Mioto Valley, not disguised, and yet not easily to be recognized, thirty-six hours later. He bought a second-hand Ford runabout at Grovetown, avoided trains and interurban cars thereafter, and was a busy man.

He visited every county-seat in the valley, and asked many questions, too, of local real estate men. And he was enormously interested in a curious epidemic of purchases of farm lands and acreage. He had long lists of names when he was done.

Back in Lewistown, he went to Fairfield's office at once, and very quietly he laid down certain lists of transfers.

"You had the right idea," he said. "But you didn't have it soon enough. Every one of your five sites has been bought up—except for a few parcels. And about half of the buying was done before the meeting the other day—from three to five weeks before it."

Fairfield stared.

"Meaning?" he said.

"You haven't talked. But I suppose your field-men can see as far through a stone wall as any one else. And some of them have—well, let's be charitable and say they've been indiscreet."

"I see," said Fairfield. "Well, we take the other sites? I see now why you told me to loosen up on these."

"No, you don't—not yet. I haven't given them up yet. But that's for later. I've got to go to my own shop—but I'll see you later in the day. I wanted you to know this much now, though."

He walked out then, and over to the Mioto Trust. Even as he passed through the banking-room he was conscious of curious eyes upon him; of something strange and ominous in the very air. His secretary looked up, scared and white. He opened the door of his own room. And at that desk opposite his own, sat John Graham, smiling a crooked smile.

"Hello, Jim!" he said, in a queer, hoarse voice.

To Jim, the sight of the old man, alive, up, restored to some grotesque semblance of health and vigor, was like a sudden fissure in firm ice before a speeding skater.

"Surprised—eh?" said John Graham.

"I'm glad to see you're better, sir," said Jim.

"Needn't lie!" Graham's twisted grin was the very essence of ill will. He chuckled. "Had things worked out pretty nicely, didn't you? Just one thing you didn't figure on—my getting back."

Jim hesitated about an answer. As the situation took shape in his mind, he recoiled from his first instinct of surrender—his feeling that his fight was lost. He could not admit that, could not give up what he had had within his grasp—rehabilitation in his own sight and Lewistown's and Margaret's. It was much more than that, too. No purely altruistic motive could have held him up in that first minute of realization.

In that swift moment of thought Jim found and clung to the thing that after all, had been gained since the flood, during the long term of John Graham's illness and his own undisputed ascendency. The odds were still on John Graham's side, thanks to

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

his own negligent carelessness. But, at least, the issue had been joined, as, before that night of the flood, it never had been.

"Been raising hell, haven't you?" said John Graham. "Been having some fun? Well—it'll work out all right—no thanks to you!"

"I hope so," said Jim, and smiled. "I don't know that I've been raising hell, though, exactly. That's not been my idea."

"Idea!" Graham scoffed at the word. "You don't know an idea when you see it!"

Jim was watching the older man's face intently. The curious, twisted look that had never left it since he had suffered his stroke was still there. It gave his whole expression a cast saturnine and ominous.

But, as far as Jim was concerned, John Graham had no further use for masks. His attack was swift and ruthless.

"Thought I was through didn't you?" he said. "But I'll live long enough to leave you mighty little to gloat over, my boy."

On those words, the very mockery of endearment and affection, his face was twisted into a guise even more malevolent than was now its customary wear.

"You've had a free hand here. I've known that—and kept quiet. You had your power of attorney—until I revoked it, to-day. You stood to take all I could leave, by a will I didn't dare to alter till I was out of bed—so that you couldn't break it on the ground that I lacked my senses. I'll give such proof that I'm sane before I'm through that no court will ever touch the new will I'm making now."

"You don't think I wanted what you'd leave—" Jim was stung into the swift rejoinder, saw, just a moment too late, the yawning trap. Graham leaped on his word.

"No! If I'd given you another month, there'd have been nothing for me to leave. Oh, you're a holy terror with your committees and your public spirit—but you could turn everything you could into money and put it in your name!"

"There were reasons——"

"I dare say." Graham had achieved his purpose in putting Jim on the defensive. "A crook always has reasons. Now—I'll give you a chance to come through. Are you ready to do as you're told?"

Jim seized upon the opening that gave him.

"Probably not," he said. "Look here, sir; leave out everything else, and what you'd want me to do—what you want to do yourself—would be rotten bad business. You've been sick. You've listened to no one but Flood and Kuser and that lot. You don't know the way things have changed——"

"I may know more than you think."

"That's all right, too. But—well, the flood's changed everything here. People won't stand again for what they did before the flood. They won't submit to graft and crooked manipulation. And if there weren't any better reason for us to change our tactics, there's this: it'll pay to do it, and it'll be ruinous not to."

John Graham only sneered.

"We're not the only ones." Jim identified himself with all that had gone before without a thought. "I can tell you a dozen men in town who've changed their tactics—who are running straight now."

"They're afraid," said Graham contemptuously. "Oh, maybe it's the money they see a chance to make. Hanshew and Fairfield—where do you think you'd get off, playing their game for them? Do you suppose they've passed up a chance to make a dollar? The water-power—and the graft there'll be in framing the assessments! They'll leave you holding the bag. I've seen spasms of reform before. I know what they're worth, how long they last. I'm offering you your chance. Come back—do as you're told. I'll see you through then. I'll—I'll forget everything that's happened—my—son."

JUST for a moment there was between them, the old man and the young, some bond mysterious, baffling to them both. It held them in a curious sympathy as their eyes met. Then Jim shook his head.

"I'm sorry, sir," he said. "I—I really wish we could get together—that there were some way for us to do it. I'd like to have you with me and behind me in this fight——"

"Fight!" There was surprising strength in Graham's voice. "There'll be no fight!" He settled down into his chair. "That's your last word? Right! When you go you can take what you please—everything I want's been cleared out of your desk. You're through here. You'd better write your resignation from the offices you hold

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

in my companies and their directorates—unless you want to be removed. It makes no difference to me."

"Nor to me," said Jim. "I'll give you the resignations, of course."

"Glad you've got some sense left! You needn't come around—here or at home. I'll have your things at the Farms sent wherever you say. That's all."

Jim sat at his desk a few minutes more. Under the other's baleful glare he went through certain papers, folded some and put them in a brief case. He called a stenographer and dictated a form of resignation.

"Fill in these names," he said, "as soon as you can, please. I want to sign them and get away."

He rose then and went out. He went down-stairs to the bank, wrote a check and took it to the teller's window.

"Have this certified, will you, Frank?"

The teller took the check, stamped the certification across its face with no more than a glance at the sum and picked it up.

"You'd better not sign this yourself—I'll take it to Jackson," he said, smiling.

But when he came back it was to pick up another stamp and smear the one word "Canceled" across the certification.

"Sorry," he said. "Your balance is just a thousand dollars. We've paid out the rest on a check drawn this morning and signed by Colonel Graham under your power of attorney to him."

Jim stared a moment; then he laughed.

"All right," he said. "I didn't know, Frank. Wait a minute—I'll write another check and take that thousand. Fifties, please."

He remembered that Jim Graham's personal account had shown a balance of exactly one thousand dollars, by a curious coincidence, when he had looked at his check-book the day after the flood.

He took the money that was pushed out to him, counted it and put it in his pocket. Then he went into the safe-deposit section and went to his box. It had been rifled, of course—the power of attorney again. Certain highly negotiable securities were gone. Altogether, John Graham had succeeded that morning in retrieving something like four hundred thousand dollars of the capital Jim had planned to use in his fight.

But one vitally important sheet of paper, bearing notes of certain things he had done the day he had had his talk with Fairfield, had remained in his pocket.

Before going up-stairs again he went out, hatless, and walked to the near-by telegraph-office. He sent several messages. One, repeated to various brokers in New York and Chicago, canceled a certain power of attorney executed by James Graham in favor of his father. Others directed a different disposition of the sums realized or to be realized from the sale of certain securities than his original instructions had contemplated.

When he went back to the office the little pile of resignations was ready for him. He looked each over, signed it then, and put it aside. When he had done, he smiled at John Graham.

"I'll trade with you," he said. "I'll give you these and save you some trouble. Want to let me have that power of attorney? I'll be revoking it, anyway, of course. But it would be so much easier—and you've done all you can with it; haven't you?"

There was something like reluctant admiration in John Graham's answering grin. He took a paper from his drawer and handed it across the desk.

"Fair enough!" he said. "Anything else?"

"No," said Jim. "I guess not. Good-by—father."

John Graham started, stared, all his malevolent hatred back in his eyes. He said nothing, and Jim took his hat and his brief-case and went out.

HE WAS frowning as he walked across Jackson Square toward the Second National Bank. He could not give up, could not surrender now. Yet the chances were against him; he recognized that. And he shrank from the sort of thing he knew must follow the publication of an open breach between father and son.

Not for a moment, though, was he tempted to admit defeat before it had actually come. Certain funds he had deposited in the Second National were secure; it was a relief to learn that something had escaped John Graham's grasp. That money, and what he had been able to retrieve by the telegrams he had sent, would give him a working-fund. He might or might not, as his campaign developed, be able to get help from others—Hanshew, perhaps, or some

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

other man interested, as he still wanted to believe that Hanshew was, in the realization of his vision.

He went straight from the bank to Fairfield's office; the engineer put on his hat when he saw him.

"Let's walk along the levee," he said. "I'm getting nervous about talking in a room."

"I've got bad news," said Jim, and told Fairfield as much as he could. The engineer nodded.

"Yes," he said; "I see. Well, I'm surprised—and I'm not. I didn't know about your father's condition. I did know—well, that you hadn't exactly lived up to what people looked for from your family lately. Can you carry on?"

"I can try," said Jim. "What's the hitch at the capital?"

"We'd have been beaten on a vote yesterday," said Fairfield soberly. "We can get a vote whenever we like—the committee's with us, eight to three. But we're stuck in the House. The Senate passed the bill that was introduced there, but the House bill is what counts. Well—I'm not as much upset as Hanshew is."

"What's the trouble?"

"Oh, the dams, mostly—and it's honest fear. I can't blame them much. Dams have burst. It's bad business to have people living in a constant state of nerves."

"You're satisfied, though?"

"Yes—or I wouldn't have suggested these retaining basins. And we've planned the dams to withstand a pressure of water greater than they can ever be called on to hold back. If there's any margin of danger left, I don't see it."

"Well—people can be made to understand that, can't they?"

"I hope so," said Fairfield. "I think so, too. Of course—we're up against a lot of factors. Your friends with the idea of big profits in real estate will be against us. So will the people who'd profit by cement dams instead of the earthen ones I'm calling for. So will a lot of short-sighted folk who are afraid of expense—of being assessed for the cost of the project.

"And some of our people are playing into the hands of the opposition. This water-power thing's like a snake—I come across its trail in the most unexpected places. But still, when all's said and done, I maintain that what we've started working on will be the determining factor—this business of costs. If we can control five adequate dam-sites, within reasonable cost-figures, we can beat the opposition. If we have to admit that we'll have to submit to being held up—well, they'll probably beat the bill."

"Right!" said Jim. "Well, all I can do is try. How about Hanshew?"

"He doesn't agree with me," said Fairfield reluctantly. "He thinks the cost of the dam-sites is a minor factor. Damn it! It would be to him! He keeps on thinking of this in terms of his own business. He's working on it in his own mind, as he did when he gave his factories sprinkler protection against fire.

"He knew they'd pay for themselves, whatever they cost. And he expects a bunch of farmers in Adams County and their assemblyman to look at it that way if he argues with them! Well, they won't."

"We'll probably have to drop your first-choice sites," said Jim. "I don't believe I can put through the plan I was figuring on—now. But I'll try for the others. And—I think I'll keep what I'm doing to myself for a while, if you don't mind."

"Rather not know," said Fairfield, promptly. "I might talk in my sleep—I'll swear some things have leaked that I thought safe. Lord! If I could just be an engineer and not have to play politics, too!"

"I know," Jim nodded sympathetically. "Well, if you know where there's a good strong rabbit's foot you'd better go get it. We're going to need it."

AT THE capital, the Conservancy Bill lingered on in committee. Hanshew raged first, began to sulk then, vowed that communities so steeped in narrowness of mind and shortness of vision should, for all of him, be flooded out again and be damned to them. Yet he worked on, financed liberally enough the campaign of education that was initiated in the valley.

Yet adjournment came and the bill was not reported out. That meant reintroduction at the autumn session, supposing the governor should call one. The state law was curious, with an election in September, not November—a survival of old days, cumbrous and expensive when the Federal law required a second election day on the

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

common date, but, in this instance, convenient and fortunate.

For Jim Graham, once the fight had settled down into a long, slow one, there was at once a lightening and an intensification of his problem. He had gone back to Jim Hasbrook's dingy old offices on Jackson Square. Ostensibly he and his office were devoted to the practise of the law, but his clients were fewer even than Hasbrook's had been in the old days.

He gave up his rooms, his car. He resigned from all his clubs save the Mioto, which he could not afford to give up, lived as barely and as simply as some Hindu ascetic in two cheap rooms that he found in a house near the river. He had money enough, to be sure, but he could foretell too easily the need of ten dollars for every one that stood to his credit in the Second National. Yet men have counted themselves well off upon an income smaller than the one he was afraid to touch.

In the wooden building by the river, Fairfield and his engineers continued their work. This was a private enterprise still; it was financed by the Flood Commission that Hanshew had galvanized into life. Maps were being made, plans and specifications drawn. Fairfield was betting the commission's money, with Hanshew's consent, upon the issue in the legislature after the election.

Across Jackson Square from the old red-brick building in which Jim spent his days, John Graham spent an hour or two each day at his desk. He was curiously like some old and bloated spider, fed nearly to satiety, yet waiting, with a diabolical patience, the ensnaring of one last victim in his web. He was not active; with Flood and all the precious crew of the old building ring, he bided his time. And yet, slowly, piece by piece, Jim and Fairfield were able to reconstruct the plan that lay behind that silence and that inactivity.

If Hanshew was financing a campaign of education through the valley, John Graham was supplying the sinews for a counter-offensive designed to strengthen the fear and the ignorance that stood in the way of making the valley safe from floods. And as Jim mastered the details of Fairfield's comprehensive plans for construction, the inspiration of John Graham's opposition became increasingly plain.

So, through the waning summer, the fight went on. And Jim, quietly, as secretly as he could, went about his work. There was much talk of the dam-sites; almost openly, now, Fairfield and his men talked of the five sites that had, in effect, been chosen. Lines were run, surveys made. One or two rough maps, blue-printed, disappeared from the office; Fairfield grinned as he told Jim of their loss.

And in various county-seats transfers of title continued to be recorded, and certain solid citizens of Lewistown and its neighboring cities became the owners of rural acreage that, a year earlier, they would have refused to consider on any terms.

Jim himself, so far as public knowledge went, was in eclipse. With the severance of his connection with the Mioto Trust, much of his value to Hanshew's work was at an end; Hanshew had little time for him. His work, to be sure, had been done, to a great extent; it was thanks to his skill and judgment and his subordination of his own interests and those of the Mioto Trust that the vital work of repair and reconstruction after the flood had been financed upon terms that had made the city's recovery easier and swifter than any one had thought to be possible.

MARGARET was disposed to be angry at the way he had been dropped.

"It's not fair!" she said indignantly. "I'm ashamed of them! You were invaluable—and they worked you like a pack-mule. And now——

He grinned.

"Maybe it's not fair, but it's customary," he said. "We waste an awful lot of time expecting to keep on collecting dividends on what we've done. People seem to think that if they've ever done anything half-way decent, they ought to be able to live on it the rest of their lives.

"Well, it doesn't work that way. I guess you get something out of being decent, all right—but you don't get it from other people, and you oughtn't to." He sighed, looked rather grim for a moment. "It's not like being a rotter—you keep on getting the benefit of that, all right!" And then he laughed. "Funny thing! When you get to being deep and evolve some profound thought, it's about a ten to one bet that old Shakespeare beat you to it! Get me?

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Paraphrasing what he had Marc Antony say about Cæsar—how the evil that men do lives after them and the good's tucked away with their bones."

Margaret looked at him curiously.

"You're changing, Jim," she said. "You—yes, you, used to be bitter. It was one of the things I couldn't stand. But now—well, you can laugh about things that go wrong."

"Might as well," he said. "Good practise."

"Have you seen Dr. Norton again?" she asked.

"Haven't had time." He frowned. "Haven't thought much about all that lately. It seems—well, it seems frightfully unreal."

"I know. It does to me, too. And still—I wish you'd go to see him. And tell——"

"The whole thing?" He laughed. "I haven't even thought of it myself for a long time."

"I don't either, as a rule—except when something makes me. Like—well, like the way you've changed. You know—sooner or later you're going to come back to that, Jim. To the memory of that night—and what happened."

"I suppose I will," he said more soberly. "Yes; that's inevitable." He looked at her, and under the steady challenge of his eyes hers fell. He hesitated. "There's—well, there's us," he said. "You and I. I suppose I ought to think it's settled."

"No," she said. And then she, too, stopped, and it was a full minute before she went on. "I—I don't know why, but I'm glad you don't, Jim. I— Things haven't changed, really. But—I think, I hope—they will."

"What a corker you are!" he said. "There isn't another woman living who could come out and talk—oh, like that—straight!"

"I can talk to you," she said quietly. "Now, I couldn't before. That was one of the things that was wrong. You—whichever of you it was—there was something that got in the way when we wanted to talk—because we did—we tried—he as well as I——"

"I think I will go to see Norton," he said.

HE WENT to Norton's that night and found the doctor at home.

"Hello!" Norton said. "Graham, isn't it? I haven't seen you since the day after the flood. You look pretty fit."

"I am," said Jim. "And still—this is a professional visit, if you'll stand for it out of hours."

"Hours!" said Norton. He laughed. "They're the luxuries of general practitioners. Shoot!"

Norton knocked out his pipe, filled and lit it anew, settled back in his chair to listen. And Jim, more quietly and evenly than he could have believed it would be possible, told his story for the second time.

"There you are!" he said, when he had finished. "Now—what's the answer? Is such a thing possible? Or am I mad?"

"No; you're not mad," said Norton. "I don't know that I've any real right to deliver that as a professional opinion yet—but I'll say this: that I'm willing to bet money you're not. As to possibility—well, pretty nearly anything's possible. We don't know as much as we think we do, you know." He reached for pad and pencil. "We've a sort of technic," he said. "It's still pretty crude—trial and error. But it helps. You'll think some of my questions are just silly—but answer them just the same."

Then for half an hour he subjected Jim to a fire of questions. He searched Jim's memories, as Graham and as Hasbrook, for years past. From time to time he uttered an exclamation and made a special note.

"That's all—for now," he said. "Curious—the whole thing!"

"Curious?" Jim was inclined to be angry but he laughed.

"My dear chap, I'm really flattering you. I think—mind you, I don't know yet—that Freud records two cases like yours, and Adler at least one. I've got to go further before I can say. But I can't tell you that you represent something absolutely new and unheard of, because there's not one chance in a thousand that you do."

"You mean that there's some rational—some natural explanation?"

"I don't know. You're opening up a wide field when you use words like 'rational' and 'natural.' We mightn't be able to agree on definition. For the moment, all I'm going to say is that I've got to make a full and exhaustive analysis of your mind—and by that I mean, of course, your subconscious mind as well as the one you know something about yourself."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Well—all right! What do you want me to do?"

"Give me an hour whenever you can—once a day, if possible, for a while. I've got to probe your mind the way a surgeon probes for a bullet that's gone deep. I've got to get at the truth, and it's hidden under the most astounding mass of trivial and irrelevant things. But when we're through I think you'll find the time's not been wasted."

"I wish you could explain a little——"

"I can't very well," said Norton patiently. "The human mind is the most mysterious and illusive thing in the world. You don't, as you suppose, think a single thing at a time—you may have a score or a hundred underlying and simultaneous thoughts under the main one of which you're conscious.

"We speak and think of memory as of something absolute. And, in the sense in which we regard it, it's not—it's purely relative. We don't forget things—we stop remembering them for definite and more or less valid reasons. Actually, we never 'forget' anything, as we think we 'forget' to post a letter or keep an engagement. When we 'forget' such things it's because, for some reason, we want to.

"In my work there are well-authenticated cases of infantile memories, that have been thoroughly checked up, going back to the second year of life. Ultimately we'll get back to birth itself—the first gleams of consciousness that are in human life. But now—forget all this till we're ready to go to work."

A CURIOUS indifference possessed Jim, once he had begun to deal with Norton. He did what he was told; he answered questions; he responded without interest to the various tests. Their object was hidden from him; he felt, as he told Margaret, as he remembered having done in school as a small boy when the drawing teacher had led the class through the copying of lines that, as they were drawn, were without meaning or significance.

"It's all silly!" he protested.

"It's not silly, though, really, Jim. And he can't explain—it would simply interfere with what he's trying to do."

"Oh, I can see that," said Jim. "I don't really mean it's silly—just that I don't understand. I suppose that's exactly what we do mean, most of the time, when we scoff at things. And—after all, I've some pretty serious business on my hands."

"I know," she said. "How are things going?"

"I can't say. Everything depends on something else—that's the trouble. I'm at the mercy of factors I can't control, and that's pretty hard. I—well, I hate to give up the sites Fairfield really wants. But the trouble is that the people who control them can afford to hang on. I'm waiting as long as I dare before I close up the others, though. I've managed to stay under cover pretty well. I've got options on about ninety per cent. of the land in four of his second-choice sites, and he says they'll do well enough. One trouble is that they're more expensive—that better land's involved, I mean."

"How about Bear Creek?"

"I'm leaving that. We may have to take our medicine there—because it's so obviously a compulsory site. But people who are trying to put something over are mighty jumpy sometimes, and I guess we'll risk a small bet on that."

"If you have options, why aren't you all right?"

"Because some of them are dated so that they must be taken up before election—or renewed. And the minute you try to renew an option, there's likely to be trouble, because most men are sorry for it the day after they've signed an option. And I haven't money enough to swing them all."

"I see," Margaret frowned. "I wonder if dad—why he shouldn't help?"

Jim hesitated, frowned, looked away.

"I don't want to—I wouldn't ask him."

"But it's to his interest——"

Jim was still hesitating; he made up his mind suddenly.

"I wasn't ever going to tell you," he said. "But, look here, Margaret; your father's heavily interested in the deals for the land Fairfield wanted for his first-choice sites. Not personally—so far as I know. But his bank is. It's lent money, with that land as security—and the loans are in excess of the actual value of the land as farm-acreage. They're based on what those people expect to get from the Conservancy District."

"And you think dad——"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Oh, Margaret, I'm not judging him! After all, he's got to consider his depositors and his shareholders. I'm sorry the loans were made—for one thing, because, if I have any luck, the bank will probably lose on them before it's through. But there's no use in being too hard on your father. He's done only what any other banker in town would have done—and what half of them have done; as a matter of fact."

"But they were all on the Flood Commission—dad and the others?"

"I know. But when it comes to that, the only men I'm willing to count absolutely as being free from any suspicion of trying to make something for themselves out of the whole conservancy plan are Hanshew and Dirck Hudson."

"It's pretty bad, isn't it?" she said. "I mean—dad's a perfectly honest man——"

"I know. So are these others. It leaves you up in the air. It's frightfully mixed up. You can't just trust to snap judgments. Of course—my little lot—" He stopped, his mouth twisted in disgust. "I don't see any palliation there. It's frank greed. But even that's hard to understand. I think it's something more than that with my father, whatever it is with Flood and Kuser—now, at least. He's an old man. He isn't going to live long, and he knows it. He hasn't—well, he certainly can't be thinking of leaving me a great fortune——"

"It's wanting to win, perhaps, Jim. That would mean a lot to him—more than to any one I know, I think."

"Except me! There won't be much for me if I'm beaten on this thing."

"I can't see that."

"I can." He wasn't bitter, really, although there was bitterness in his voice. "Think! Before the flood I had a certain sort of reputation—Jim Graham did—a pretty rotten one. Well, who'll believe I ever meant to play straight if I don't come through? Especially when, if I lose, my father'll profit by it."

"But——"

"Oh, you know—and I know—and I have a sort of feeling, although he won't say anything, that Norton does, too, and believes what I tell him. But most people have got to judge by what they know, and I couldn't make them believe the truth, even if I would. Well—I can't afford to lose."

"Don't borrow trouble, then," she advised.

THERE was, as a matter of fact, no need of that. Only a day or so after that talk with Margaret he had to admit reluctantly defeat in one project. He had kept a considerable sum of money on hand against a particular contingency. He and Fairfield, working together, had planted certain misinformation in quarters likely to prove indiscreet. Their object had been to frighten some, at least, of the holders of the choicer dam-sites and so to induce them to run to cover. But, although one or two, who had had only options, not actual purchases of land to consider, had risen to the bait, most of the members of what Jim was beginning to regard as a syndicate stood firm.

And now the situation, so far as it concerned the election, was taking a new turn, too. Hanshew ceased being sullen and began to look cheerful. And Dirck Hudson rather disgustedly explained the source of his chief's contentment.

"We're sure of thirty votes—of the forty-one we need," he said. "It seems—well, to be brutally frank about it, we've sewn things up in more than half the doubtful districts by getting both men pledged so that we can't lose whichever is elected. I know one man who's made his whole fight on opposition to the bill—and who'll vote for it if he's elected."

"He'll be dead politically."

"I don't believe that's worrying him," said Hudson. "In fact, I think he's discounted that possibility—at a liberal figure."

Fairfield laughed. Jim frowned first, and then laughed, too.

"The end justifies the means—and the moon may be made of green cheese for all we know," he said. "You think the bill's safe, then?"

"Safe as a church," said Hudson. "I will bet money that enough votes can be changed before Christmas to see us through."

"I see," said Jim. "Then if you'd acquired some land likely to be needed for one of the dams, you'd hold on to it?"

"I would—yes," said Hudson. He stared at Jim and the engineer. "Only, I haven't, as it happens."

"I know that," said Jim. "But suppose

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

some one had, with access to the same inside information you have—he'd be likely to cash in if he waited?"

"I suppose so," said Hudson stiffly.

And later, when Hudson had gone,

"Well—half a loaf's better than no bread," Jim said. "Let's check up on my options for your second-choice sites."

The options Jim had were all right. Added to a few parcels he had bought, risking some loss, because their owners would do business on no other terms, he controlled potentially nine-tenths of the land needed for four dams. But Bear Creek was gone; he had been too late there.

"That'll have to wait," said Jim. "But I think we can shake that down later—when the whole thing's settled and you're ready to make official announcements. And a few gangs working eight miles up-stream might give those birds something to think about."

"I know the place you mean, but any engineer could tell them it wouldn't do."

"*Any* engineer won't, though," said Jim. "I don't want to hurt your pride, Fairfield, but I'm afraid you'll find that your profession, as a whole, won't study your scheme much till you've got it actually working—unless engineering's a lot more free from jealousy than law, for instance."

Once more now, and even more quietly than before, Jim went out into the valley. So far as he could, he worked through others, but he was not disposed to trust many people just then. He was able to extend some of his options, but, on the other hand, he found that some of the farmers who had given him a refusal of their property had, since he had seen them, accepted cash offers and made sales. He had grounds for suit in those instances—but it was not a lawsuit, no matter how excellent his chances of victory, that he wanted, but real estate.

What worried him was that his trail had been followed. And one result of this was that an extension of time was often refused. He had only one recourse in such circumstances, and the checks he signed ate steadily into his diminishing bank-account.

Long before he came to the end of the buying that was forced upon him, his money was practically exhausted. He borrowed, on the best terms he could make, giving as collateral the land he had already bought and paid for, and used the money thus obtained to continue buying. But he was unable to make good terms. Money was tight; farm-property was a drug on the market. And it troubled him to find that the ordinary long-term mortgage was not to be made. The banks wouldn't look at him as a rule; he had to go to individuals who sailed as close to the wind as they dared, demanding bonuses and fees to swell the legal rate of interest, and insisting, moreover, on short-term arrangements. He got a little money for six months, a little more for ninety days. But the bulk of the money he borrowed was returnable in either thirty or sixty days.

JIM completed his work with his options on the Friday before election, talked to Fairfield on the Saturday. In Saturday evening's papers the Flood Commission announced, as a clinching argument, that, thanks to the public spirit and the enterprise of a citizen of Lewistown, it was in a position to secure the land required for the dams called for by Fairfield's plan at a price certain to be at least two million dollars below its own lowest previous estimate. The opposition had dwelt much on the cost of the land involved, and had insisted that the official estimate was too low by probably ten million dollars—having reasons of its own for thinking so.

Hanshew, at first, not too well pleased, had finally sanctioned the announcement.

"Making too much of this cost business," he said. "Either we want protection or we don't. If we do, cost's not important. I don't believe condemnation would mean such a hold-up, either."

"I didn't think so at first," said Jim. "But I've gone into that——"

"So've I," said Hudson, whose word carried weight with Hanshew. "The trouble is that every political hack in the valley is lined up against us. Here in Lewistown, and in Carthage and Adams, we'd come out well enough. But up through the valley, where most of the land is that we've got to have, we'd be up against locally elected judges who play politics as hard and as much as any ward-heeler here in the old days. Oh, I don't say they're crooked. I don't believe there's a county judge of the lot that could be influenced in his decisions on any case before him. But when it comes to appointing condemnation commissioners

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Margaret sat, in wild-eyed wonder, looking from Norton to Jim. "Oh," she cried once, "how horrible! But, Jim——"

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

and referees—well, that's how they build up their machines. When judges have to come up for reelection regularly they're like other men—they consider their own interests. I think Fairfield and Graham are dead right."

"I don't quarrel with that part of it particularly," said Hanshew. "What I'm afraid of is a boomerang—some sort of flare-back between now and Tuesday." He looked hard at Jim. "We've more than one Graham to consider, these days."

Jim flushed. But there was nothing he could say. And, once Hanshew had been brought into line, he felt better. He was distinctly cheerful when he saw Margaret that evening. Early reports from the districts in which the issue was going to be decided on Tuesday indicated that the greatly reduced cost of the Fairfield project, promised by the statement, was having a profound effect upon the frugal and thrifty rural voters.

He slept well that night—and woke on Sunday morning to find his own name spread out across the head-lines of the two papers in screaming type. Incredulously he read the stories. He was named as the owner of the property that was to be used for the four dams. But the statement that it was to be available for public use at cost was ridiculed. Both papers charged, with reservations enough to provide some sort of defense against libel suits, that he had from the first been in league with John Graham and the interests opposed to the creation of a Conservancy District, and that, in some fashion, his titles and options would be transferred to those interests. The inference was plain; it was that John Graham and his associates would profit even if they were defeated, since they would control every available dam-site.

HE REACHED Fairfield before either had breakfasted; the engineer was angry but cheerful.

"It's such a silly lie," he said. "Lord! There are a hundred ways of nailing it."

"I'm not so sure," said Jim. "Come along; we've got to get to Hanshew."

But Hanshew refused to see Jim. Fairfield, having been admitted, came out frowning.

"I think the chief's crazy," he said indignantly. "He's off you, Jim—seems to believe that you're in with your father. He's afraid of some explosion to-morrow."

"So'm I," said Jim. "I've got a hunch that the best thing I could do for myself and the bill would be to leave town to-day and be out of the state before midnight."

"Good Lord! You can't do that. You'd be confessing everything."

"I know," said Jim. "That's what makes it so hard to know what I ought to do. It seems to me they've got me either way—that it's a case of I'll be damned if I do and damned if I don't. Well—I'll make a statement for the morning papers. But it's bad business, working in the dark."

"Hanshew——"

"Oh, I don't blame him!" Jim laughed, without bitterness. "You're been warned against me, haven't you, Fairfield? You don't know the sort of reputation I had here before the flood."

"You've been of more use to the city than any man in it except Hanshew."

"I've done what I could. But it doesn't matter much when it comes to a test; does it? Oh, well—no use going into that. All we can do is to sit tight and wait for to-morrow."

One thing, though, angered him and did embitter him—the fact that both newspapers had printed a vicious attack on him without giving him any chance to state his case. But during the day that was explained. And the Macchiavellian hand of John Graham was plainly to be seen. Both papers had tried to reach Jim. He had not been at home. But early in the evening some one had telephoned to his landlady to say, in his name, that he had been called out of town. And similar messages had been sent to the Mioto Club, to Fairfield's office and to every place where he was likely to be during an evening. Reporters, combing the town for him, had been met with that lying statement, made by people who had every reason to suppose that they were telling the truth. They had not thought of calling the Thorne country house. And he had stayed late, for other people had come in.

He saw Margaret again that night, left her about eleven, and walked a mile to the interurban line that he now used in place of the car he had sold. He thought once or twice that he heard echoing footsteps behind him, but could see no one. A man

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

did, however, swing aboard the car just before it moved away at the stop. And in the city he had no more doubts; the same man followed him home.

The distant bell of St. Peter's boomed out the first stroke of midnight as he turned the corner into his own block. He saw two men lingering outside the gate of the house as he neared it, and, turning, saw the man of the trolley-car hastening his steps. The twelfth stroke of the church bell rang out.

"All right, Tom. It's Monday morning now."

Puzzled, he heard one of the men by the gate speak. Then a paper was thrust into his hand.

"Mr. Graham—Mr. James Graham—will you accept service?"

He stared at the legal paper he held. Then he laughed. The man had witnesses to prove the service. He moved over toward the nearest street-lamp.

"All right," he said. "I'll have a look at this."

It took little more than a look to tell him how crushing was this blow. More than one paper had been given to him. Summons and complaint in the suit of John Graham against James Graham, alleging wrongful use of a certain power of attorney and the conversion, fraudulently and unlawfully, of certain moneys and securities, and praying for a judgment. And a copy of a temporary injunction, granted late on Saturday night by Melville, J., forbidding the said James Graham to sell or transfer any property.

He was tied hand and foot. And Hanshew had said that, in some fashion, the land he held would find its way into the control of John Graham! Who, after what the papers had printed Sunday morning, would believe that he had not conspired with his father to stage this farce?

IF OF Lewistown's two morning papers, the *Star*, friendly to the Conservancy Bill, printed nothing on Monday morning of the new attack on Jim Graham, in the *Times* there was a full account.

Jim went to Hudson as early as he saw signs of life in his house. Hudson alone of those with whom he had worked might, he thought, have left some traces of faith in him. He told him what he knew and what he surmised.

"I can beat this suit," he said. "But I don't see how I can do it without money. And, even if I do, it's no use unless my options are covered and my loans are met. They'll be just as well off if I lose the land—whether they win this trick or not in the courts. Whereas, if we can get time——"

Hudson shook his head.

"I believe you're straight, Graham," he said. "But I can't move the chief. He says the election's gone—that we'll have a majority against the bill." He shrugged his shoulders. "That doesn't worry him. Mind you, I'm against it. But—well, the chief's been fixed before so that he had to change a few votes. Especially in the old days when senators were elected by a joint ballot in the legislature. He's never been willing to gamble much on your way of swinging this thing. And—I can't do a thing myself."

"I thought you might be able to persuade some of your friends to see me through."

"I don't think there's a chance, Graham. I'll try—but I haven't much hope."

"I suppose you're right," said Jim. "Well—I'm going to my father." He laughed scornfully. "I suppose every one who sees me going into the Mioto Trust will take that as final proof that I'm a crook."

"Hard luck!" Hudson held out his hand. "Sorry there's so little I can do."

"I'm the dog with a bad name," said Jim. "Well, the dog usually does something to earn it."

"I know what you mean," said Hudson. "Fact is, I wasn't inclined to trust you much right after the flood—going by what I'd heard. But I form my own judgments when I work with a man. If it does you any good to know that I—well—hang it——"

"It helps," said Jim. "Thanks!" He shook hands again and went on his way.

Fairfield was shaken, but disposed still to fight; he scouted the idea that anything could shake his faith in Jim. And the support of those two men strengthened Jim.

He had no difficulty in reaching John Graham, was told, indeed, that he was expected. He grinned when he heard that, and walked into the familiar room with his head up and his shoulders back. John Graham gave him his twisted smile as he saw him, waved him toward a chair.

"Rather stand—thanks!" said Jim.

"You're broke," said John Graham.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Come here to admit it? Come crawling on your belly?"

"Not a bit! Your injunction'll be dissolved the minute there's a hearing on the facts. Your suit'll fall of its own weight—you haven't the shadow of a case."

"Happen this morning—or any time before election?"

"Maybe not. Look here, sir; I want to give you a chance in this thing. So far, you've put me in a hole, I admit it. But you've let yourself in for something, too. It'll show soon enough that I'm not in league with you. The truth's bound to come out, and when it does you'll be a stench in the nostrils of every decent man in Lewistown."

"Think I care? Sha'n't live long enough to know."

"Don't be too sure." Jim's voice was grave. "You know what happened here that night—the night of the flood——"

Malignant hate was in the old man's eyes.

"You don't know all about that," he said. "Think you're Jim Hasbrook? Do think so; don't you?"

"I—" Jim hesitated. "Yes," he said.

"So do I. Know who Jim Hasbrook is? Know your own father?"

"My father—Judge Hasbrook?" Jim started, wondering.

"*He* knew! He married your mother—when I wouldn't—when some one had to marry her if she wasn't to be found out. Married her—and gave you his name when you couldn't have mine. Married my cast-off——"

"That's enough!" Jim's voice was very low, but there must have been something deadly in his eyes. For John Graham was still, sat staring, maliciously delighted in his ugly triumph.

Not for a moment did Jim doubt the truth of that revelation. It explained so much—the bond there had been always between Jim Graham and Jim Hasbrook.

"You—my boy picked you up out of the gutter. It was a joke—to see you tagging behind him——"

"You're telling some of the truth." Jim's voice, hardened, snapping like the crack of a whip, cut through the old man's speech. "But you're not telling all of it. It wasn't you who wouldn't go on—it was my mother who wouldn't marry you—who found out what you were and was ready to face disgrace rather than——"

"How? She told no living soul—" Confession was in the words that leaped to John Graham's lips before he caught himself. His face was livid; his mouth was working. "You lie!" he cried. "It's as I said. And now you know why I hated you—why I swore I'd live long enough to smash you. I have. When I die it'll be the same. My will——"

His words died into a choking gasp. He raised himself from his chair, pitched forward across the desk. Jim was at his side. But he knew—even before he touched the limp hand and looked at the staring eyes. John Graham was dead.

Others came. Jim stood aside while they cried out. There was a great clamor for a doctor. And by a strange chance it was again Norton who came in the emergency.

"Died instantly," he said. He turned to Jim. "You were with him?"

Jim nodded, roused himself. He had neither the time nor the right to think of his own affairs. In his mind confused, groping thoughts took form. If this catastrophe could be turned to the advantage of the community that he had tried to serve—if, now that John Graham's malignity was forever removed, some compensation could be quickly made.

"I'll be back," he said. "Mr. Brewster——"

BREWSTER, vice-president of the Mioto Trust, a simple, not too clever man, who had been John Graham's right hand for years, started and turned to him. He followed Jim outside.

"A dreadful business, Jim!" he said. "Your father took your dis—what he felt was your treachery to him very hard. It's not for me to judge. I don't understand——"

"You know what's happened—this suit against me?"

Brewster nodded.

"You needn't worry," he said. "I have your father's will. It seems to me he's made full amends. He leaves everything to you—names you as sole executor——"

Jim's heart leaped. He stared at Brewster.

"When—what's the date of that will?"

"It was made the day after he returned to the office. It all goes to you—upon a

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

single condition—a strange one. You are required to acknowledge yourself to be the son of John Graham and to declare yourself glad and proud to be known as James Graham. Otherwise, everything goes to the Associated Charities of Lewistown."

"I—I see," said Jim. Here was a lesson in hatred, indeed—and in the grim power of a dead hand! "And if, by any chance, I didn't meet that condition—no; if I meet it—and I want certain things—advances—loans——"

"I could stretch a point and arrange everything as you wished, pending the settlement of the estate. There will be formalities, of course—the proving of the will——"

"If I refuse—that suit would go on?"

"That would depend on the executors."

"I see," said Jim. "I'll talk to you in a few minutes, Mr. Brewster."

"But, Jim, you won't let any quarrel make you refuse to meet this simple request?" It was Brewster's turn to stare.

"I—no; I'll see you later," said Jim. He passed his hand before his eyes; a great weariness was upon him.

THE ingenuity of John Graham's ultimate blow stirred something strangely like admiration in Jim's mind. He stood in the hall a moment, thinking. John Graham had founded his plan upon something that he did, after all, it seemed, understand—the scruples in another that in himself he would have accounted childish weakness. How small a thing it would be to meet that condition and announce himself proud to bear a name his father had denied to him! No! Even with all that was at stake, he could not do it.

He started toward the door; as he reached it, Norton came out.

"Here—you're all in!" Norton was crisp and professional in a moment. "Come with me."

"I can't. I've things to do here——"

"They can wait—you're coming with me. Now, as we go, you can tell me what's happened. You've had a shock aside from this death. You'd discounted that——"

"Oh!" Jim's will was too weak to resist; he let Norton lead him to the stairs and down. And, dully, apathetically, as he might have recounted a not particularly interesting story of another man, he told Norton what had passed between him and John Graham and what Brewster had told him concerning the will.

"Hm. Gad! That was clever—and damnable. You feel you'll have to let the inheritance go?"

"I shouldn't have wanted it on any terms—I wasn't entitled to it. I'm not Jim Graham."

"I see," said Norton. "Yes."

He hurried Jim along, brought him to his office. And inside, sitting in a chair, was Margaret Thorne. She started up.

"Jim!" she cried. "You look dreadful!"

Norton was busy already at his cabinet; in a moment he handed Jim a glass.

"Nothing serious—needs stimulation," he said. "Take that, old chap, and sit down."

Jim drank obediently, sat down, realized, as his strength returned, how near he had been to collapse.

"Now," said Norton. "Miss Thorne, I'll tell you what happened this morning."

Swiftly he told her, while she sat, in wide-eyed wonder, looking from Norton to Jim.

"Oh!" she cried once, "how horrible! But, Jim——"

Norton held up his hand.

"He feels," he said, "that he must decline to qualify under this will—since he is not Jim Graham——"

"But—" Margaret cried out.

"You are James Graham," said Norton evenly. "You always have been. The other——"

"But I've told you—I remember perfectly—that night—and he—Colonel Graham—didn't doubt——"

"The fact remains," said Norton, "that you are, as you have always been, James Graham. The story your father told you of your friend, Jim Hasbrook, may or may not be true. But he was killed on the night of the flood in the Mioto Trust Building, and, true or false, it cannot hurt him."

"Oh!" Jim cried out. "You can't explain—you can't account for what I saw——"

"On the contrary, I can," said Norton. "That's why I've had you here day after day. I've analyzed your mind until nothing in it is hidden from me. I gave up trying to take notes, either myself or with a stenographer, a long time ago. I have a recording instrument here that registers every sound. I have a record of everything you've told me.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"I've gone over this with Miss Thorne in great detail—she's helped me immeasurably. Later, I'll go into it more fully with you. Now I'm going to give you only an outline. You were, before the flood, bitterly dissatisfied and deeply unhappy. You had envied your friend Hasbrook because it seemed to you that he was freer than you—and that he had been more successful in living up to his ideals. You wished you were like him.

"That night, Miss Thorne had broken her engagement to you and told you that she believed she loved your friend—because he was true to himself, to some extent at least, and you were not. That supplied a definite reason for your wish to replace him. On the night of the flood something else happened that made you hate yourself—the episode of the woman you left behind while she screamed for help. The physical and spiritual shock of the catastrophe in the bank unsettled you momentarily. When you were revived, your subconscious mind asserted itself and seized upon an opportunity, grotesque and slim, but sufficient, to fulfil your buried wish. I have searched your memories, and they are, back to your infancy, Jim Graham's."

Jim stood up unsteadily.

"I—I don't quite know why—but I believe you! I—Margaret—I'm beginning—I'm remembering that night—when you sent me away——"

Norton nodded triumphantly.

"Now that the opening's been made, you'll remember other things," he said.

"Then—" a sudden clamorous excitement seized upon Jim, "I can go to Brewster—I can straighten everything out."

"Go!" said Margaret. "I'll wait here."

HE RUSHED out. Within fifteen minutes he and Brewster were at work in the closed bank.

"It seems disrespectful—but the emergency—" Brewster was confused.

"It's vital," said Jim. "I want these loans paid—at once. I want Mioto drafts for the amounts named in these options payable to the granters of the options attached to each one. Have some one 'phone the evening papers to send men over here to see me. And I want Fairfield here as quickly as he can come."

He himself telephoned to Dirck Hudson, and Hudson came over from his office. To him, in the presence of the reporters, Jim handed the deeds and the various options, with negotiable paper sufficient to take them up.

"I'm turning this property over to the commission," said Jim. "It can act as my agent, later, in selling it to the Conservancy District, if and when the bill is passed, and if it is needed under the plans finally approved. The price will be the actual cost of the land to me. Is that plain?"

Hudson laughed.

"Plain enough," he said.

"This'll turn the election up the valley," said one of the reporters. "It mightn't have if they hadn't worked so hard to prove you were a crook, Mr. Graham. But the man who's beaten a move like that—"

"Come on, Bill!" said his rival. "We've just about got time for the five-o'clock edition. Some story!"

"I'm going to enjoy telling this to the chief myself," said Hudson. "He isn't wrong so often."

He shook Jim's hand, smiled as he saw the man the whole town had damned that morning and would exalt that evening go off. Jim was tired, body and soul; he knew nothing of the elation of triumph. For in him there had died, with the conviction Norton had forced upon him, a hope that had never, until then, been quite dead. He went back to Norton's office; Margaret was alone, in an anteroom. Her eyes were shining as she rose to greet him.

"Well?" she said.

"I think it's all right," he said. He hesitated. "Margaret—I do remember, now. That night—I was pretty bad. I boasted; didn't I? I said I'd make you take me back?"

"Yes," she said, slowly. She laughed faintly. "You—you even said that I'd have to be the one to—to—speak first."

"Don't!" he said sharply. "I—I know it's all over now, Margaret. All this time I've been hoping—because I thought I was another man—a man you might be able to—to marry in spite of everything. But now that we know—now that I'm just the same man I always was——"

"But—you—you're not!" she cried. "Jim—oh, my dear—my dear—you're the man I always hoped—I always knew you could be!"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The Cows *of* Madura

Mystery Made All the More Fascinating by a Liberal Coating of Nonsense

By Walter De Leon

IT IS years since a comic opera has been written round a Central American revolution. The mirth-compelling internal activities of the Republic of Madura no longer find space on the front pages of our newspapers. Peace, plenty and purely personal fights are now the pleasures of the prosperous Madurans. And the responsible party is I—"Silver Jack" Golding, stock salesman and promoter at large.

During a varied career my activities have blessed or blemished nearly every known spot where civilized money circulates. My efforts to keep it circulating have carried me into far-flung lands which have, on occasion, flung me just as far back. But never has my work possessed the joyous zest, never have I manipulated markets with the aplomb and confidence that were mine previous to the day I bid a hasty *adios* to the melting-eyed Señorita Ysobelita Perfecto.

There came a day, some years ago,when I found myself ashamed of the human race for poverty padded only with pictorial stock-certificates. In the phrase of my profession, I was "sucker-sore." Selling oil stock had become too easy for a self-respecting grifter. I looked at my bank-balance, at the news-notice of a federal investigation of a company I was promoting, and decided to explore new fields. South America beckoned enticingly, in particular Madura, which boasted no extradition laws, no corporation laws, no laws which a temperamental population could not and did not amend, revise or expunge whenever a disgruntled politician promised to pay the understanding army. Leaving the bulk of my unearned increment in New York subject to check and draft, I secured passage on the good ship *Cigarro*, bound for Claro, the sun-kissed capital of Madura.

Five minutes before the ship swung into the stream, a brass band on the pier burst into the restless rhythm of a tempestuous Spanish song. "*Vivas*" and "*Bravas*" mingled enthusiastically with the melody as a young woman, followed by an adoring group of swarthy gents, made her way up the gangplank. What a woman!

Wondrous eyes under long, straight lashes glowed from her olive-tinted skin. Lips, scarlet and dewy; jet black hair dressed low at the back of her small patrician head, and a figure—I've heard Señorita Ysobelita Perfecto's figure described by sculptors and stevedores in *salon* and stoke-hole in five living languages and one dead, but never has it been done adequately or completely.

Within half an hour I knew she was the daughter of the President of Madura returning from a trip to Paris.

At luncheon I met her. At dinner she smiled upon me. At nine o'clock she danced with me. At midnight I lay awake in my berth realizing that the strange new sensation that was suffusing my being with ineffable yearning was Love, with a capital L.

Assiduously I sought her society as we southerned our way through ever-warmer days and mellowing nights. I told her of things about myself that none but the recording angel knew. And because she smiled so sweetly sympathetic, I told her many things I'd done which I might have done had circumstances not ordered otherwise.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Ah, *señor* of the piercing eye, the silver hair, the magnificent physique, the life you have led—it stirs the blood!" she whispered one night.

There was a secretary-courier with the *señorita*, a wizened old man with many wrinkles and not so much hair, by name Cabbaggio. From him I learned that Ysobelita was as yet unbetrothed. Confident of my ability to wrest her from the swains of her native land if afforded fair opportunity, I questioned the Señor Cabbaggio as to the condition of the Maduran stock exchange and the reactions of the public thereto.

The *señor* was an enthusiastic booster for his country. Maps and photographs he showed quickly convinced me that Madura was a rich, fertile land, suffering from retarded development.

"It is because," Cabbaggio explained, "outside capital has been discouraged. Before a foreigner may conduct business, a franchise must be obtained from the government. In a few months, usually, a new franchise must be obtained from the succeeding government, because the new government cannot recognize the constitutionality of the preceding government. And then, when the preceding government again becomes the succeeding government, another franchise." He shrugged his shoulders. "It is difficult for foreigners to understand."

"In other words," I said, "the wheels of chance move so rapidly a foreigner, to make money, must do so between revolutions, as it were."

"*Si, señor.*"

I did. And the next day I saw a map which fomented the large idea which stabilized perhaps forever the politics of Madura.

THE map showed, a few miles south of Claro, a large acreage of swamp entirely given over to mosquito cultivation. Full-leafed tropical trees shaded from the heat of the noonday sun voluptuous water-flowers splotching a myriad stagnant pools. The main highway to the interior of Madura skirted one grass-matted shore. Narrow-gage railroad tracks were banked along the other side.

I recalled Long Island, New Jersey and other regions wherein real-estate booms had metamorphosed the dismal bogs of nature into fertilized gardens of commuters at inspiring profits. Upon one occasion I had escaped physical violence at the hands of an infuriated assembly of Western rural citizens by concealing myself in an irrigating ditch and following its sluggish stream to safety. I had relieved the chilly monotony by studying at first hand the theory and practise of irrigation.

Why, I pondered, studying the *señor's* map, why not apply that principle to the swamp outside of Claro? Why not drain it and at the same time appeal to the Latin imagination and equatorial indolence by subdividing the reclaimed land and turning the ditches into canals, wide, shallow waterways along which, in gaudy flat-bottom boats, delighted suburbanites might drift from dirty railway station to dinner in wave-lapped bungalows?

I mentioned the possibility of some such development to the lovely Ysobelita that evening as we strolled the deck under the soft radiance of the stars.

"Magnificent, *señor!*" she cried, her midnight eyes flashing, her slender bosom heaving with repressed admiration. "It is a so noble idea! But one thing—" She hesitated.

"Money?" I guessed. "I've more than enough to buy an option on the property. Then, by forming a stock company——"

"Ah, *señor!* It is nice to know you have the money. But for your own sake you must give thought to the difficulty to get the people to buy. No?"

"Easy," I said. "Four or five choice lots could be raffled off. We could sell tickets at a dollar apiece——"

"Raffles! Lotteries!" the *señorita* interrupted, beaming. "*Señor*, how muchly you understand my people! Always it is gamble with them—gamble for anything. It will succeed if you make it a lottery. You are so clever. But—" Again she hesitated.

"Well?"

"In Madura, the government has control of all lotteries."

"Control or interest, monopoly or shakedown?"

"Supervision, I think you say."

"I expected to split with some one," I replied, thinking what a wonderful mate Ysobelita, with her practical mind, would

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

make for me. "Why not the government? And seeing your father is the head of the government, I can promise a healthy split. Do you think he would be interested?"

"I can ask him." Smiling provokingly, she lightly returned the pressure of my fervent fingers and tripped away to her cabin.

Long I stood, gazing soulfully aloft at the brilliant stars forming the Southern Cross. It twinkled intriguingly. I looked down upon the rippling surface of the phosphorescent deep. The reflection of the cross winked up at me trickily. There it was, above and beneath, the double cross, tipping me off; and I didn't get wise.

IN RESPONSE to a summons, I repaired to the Executive Palace the next afternoon at five. The president greeted me sitting. It had been a perfect gin-rickety day, and the load he had accumulated was too bulky to entrust to his spindly legs.

One look at the president and I knew his daughter had inherited her beauty from her mother. As soon as we began to talk, I realized that, though the president might have been wabbly, he was cagy.

"My daughter informs me that you have a plan for discovering loose money among my fifty-per-cent.-loyal citizenry." He smiled wishfully.

Briefly I outlined my scheme to which I had already decided to affix the name Nueva Venicia—New Venice.

"The first thing is to procure an option on the swamp," I finished. "Who owns it?"

The president shakily poured out another rickey.

"It is of the estate of Señor Ramon Panatella."

"What is his address?"

"Señor Panatella is not residing at his address. He is—er, roughing it in the mountains—indefinitely."

"Indefinitely?"

The president's little eyes scrutinized me closely before he answered:

"Señor Golding, in Madura we have two great political parties, the Federalists and the Nationalists. I and my government are of the Federalists. Señor Panatella is the leader of the Nationalist party."

"Hence the mountain retreat." I grinned.

"Of course we know where he is. But so young, so magnetic, so handsome is he, and of such phenomenal marksmanship, that no one of my adherents has yet had the relentlessness to collect the reward offered for his capture."

"That doesn't prevent the government from confiscating his property, does it?" I asked, seeing an opportunity to increase my profits.

"No, *señor*. But whenever before the Panatella property has been confiscated it has roused the Panatellas to inconceivable ferocity. Invariably have they hastened down from the mountains and abruptly thrown the government out of the palace into the sea. I"—he hiccoughed—"I do not swim."

"Then how is one to talk business to him—business that would be profitable to the government?"

"One would talk with his attorney, Señor Regalia. They have means of communicating with each other."

"How soon could he be reached?"

"As soon as the government knew what the profits will be—to the government."

"You've visited in Missouri, haven't you?" I said. "Let's get this thing doped out right now."

In another hour we had it—a grand lottery, the capital prize a twelve-room house completely furnished and a half-acre of land. The next five prizes each a six-room bungalow and lot, facing the water. When I told the president what we could buy Chicago knock-down houses for, he wept happy tears into his rickey-glass.

"The next ten prizes," he decided, "four-room bungalows and lots; then lots without bungalows, and bungalows without lots for the smaller prizes. But a question, *señor*—the financing of it all?"

"Unless you think a stock company is necessary——"

"Not at all."

"Then why not a straight fifty-fifty proposition between us?"

"It is deplorable, *señor*, but the government treasury——"

"I know better than to expect any available cash in the treasury, your Excellency. But you have your private fortune, privily made. Why give the government a share of the profits when you might have it yourself?"

"But one thing deters me: After the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

houses have all sprung leaks, when the canals begin to cave in and the mosquitoes to drive every one out of the swamp, you will be far away in your free America, while I——"

"You don't plan to remain president in perpetuity, do you," I asked, "with Paris and Madrid eager to welcome you?"

"If one could depend on an opportune steamer—" His Excellency sighed. "However, what working capital do you estimate will be required?"

"The biggest item is the engineering expense."

"Erase it, please! We have a special tax which pays government engineers to devote their skill to—er, government projects."

"Well then, labor."

The president looked puzzled.

"Labor—while our jails are filled?"

"Materials then, and advertising."

"A printing-press is maintained by the taxpayers to issue official bulletins and other authorized literature—under order of the president."

"In that case, fifty thousand dollars should be more than enough."

With pencil and paper the president began figuring.

"A million chances at fifty cents per chance would bring in five hundred thousand dollars, less ten per cent., the government's share, and our fifty-fifty fifty thousand, even if we did not sell a single lot after the lottery prizes were given out, would net us four hundred thousand dollars!"

"Split two ways," I murmured.

"But one thing more, *señor:* You will understand how my people might misunderstand the motives of their president if he should appear publicly as a partner in this—this lottery. Are you willing to keep my silent partnership a secret—upon receiving my personal check for twenty-five thousand dollars?"

"If it's certified," I promised cordially.

I HAD a curious sensation of being expected when I was admitted to Señor Regalia's office the following morning.

But that was before I told him the price I was willing to pay for the Panatella swamp.

"Listen," I said, when his brain-storm had somewhat subsided; "if you think you can rave me into paying any more for it, you don't think. All you have to do is present that price to Señor Panatella. If he doesn't feel like taking something for nothing, all you have to do is to tell me."

I felt pretty confident my offer would be accepted. The proprietor of my hotel, a stout person of eminent esteem in the regard of the neighborhood, a collector and disperser of news and gossip, had vouchsafed the information that Señor Panatella had long wished to dispose of the property.

"How long before I'll get word from you on this thing?" I asked Regalia.

"Day after to-morrow. Er—*señor*, the money—will it be cash?"

"Half cash and a draft on a New York bank."

The gleam in his eye told me there was nothing to get discouraged about.

Two mornings later, after breakfast, I walked across the street from my hotel into a plaza to await Panatella's answer. Life looked alluring as I lolled on the green-carpeted sward. I had dined with Ysobelita the night previous. I had an engagement to drive with her that afternoon. The smoke of my cigar rose lightly on the scented morning air. In the leafy palms and banana trees shadowing the plaza sounded the murmurs of a languorous breeze, soft rustlings penetrated ever and anon by the poignant cries of little children as bulbous coconuts dropped on their heads.

The landlord himself, El Ropo by name, disturbed my reveries.

"The Señor Regalia awaits you at his office for the purpose of signing some papers, *señor*," he said.

"*Señor!*" cried Ysobelita happily when I showed her the deed that afternoon. "You are a public benefactor!"

For two weeks business claimed me every hour. Work on our aquatic subdivision progressed with liquid smoothness. Prisoners long pent in unsanitary dungeons worked feverishly in the hope their efforts would be rewarded with more days in the open.

Whenever I appeared on the job I was hailed in a quaint phrase which, translated, meant "Gift from Heaven." Remembering Ysobelita's words, once or twice I was tempted to change the specifications for the concrete canal-ways, to make them more substantial, permanent, something to build hopes of a legitimate business profit

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

upon. But I felt my partner would never consent.

At length came the day we put the Nueva Venicia lottery tickets on sale. Fifty thousand were gobbled before I closed the office that afternoon.

"What are we going to do with all the cash?" I asked the president at dinner that evening.

"I have been thinking about buying drafts to send to the consulate bank in New York."

"Think no further along that line," I said. "That would show your connection with the scheme for all Madura to see and immediately reach for a gun."

Señorita Ysobelita interposed.

"May I suggest the wall safe in the library of this house as a temporary place to put the money—until you decide what is best to do?"

"*Bueno!*" cried the president. "The secret safe. Do you not see, *señor*——"

"I can't see any combination or single-lock safe," I replied firmly but not uncouthly. "However, if you want to equip the wall safe with a two-key locking device, one that requires both keys to be applied one after the other before it will open, I have no objection."

"*Bueno!*" cried the president. "Each a key—you and I. Let us do so."

By the end of the week a hundred thousand gold dollars were stored in the wall safe.

At the president's suggestion, the government printing presses were running off duplicate tickets for interested speculators in Ecuador and Venezuela. Instead of dividing a mere four hundred thousand, a million dollars stared the president and myself in the face.

IN THE *cantina* of the hotel Saturday night, after leaving Ysobelita, I requisitioned the company and the thirst of the landlord in an anticipatory celebration. As we mellowed in unison at my expense, El Ropo hitched his chair closer and closer to mine.

"Señor Golding," he finally whispered, "in return for your generosity I am become generous. I will impart a secret." Blearily cautious, he glanced about the smoke-filled room. "I will tell you where you may purchase at a bargain some spotted cows."

"Spotted cows?"

"Sh. Not so vehemently, *señor*. Spotted cows, I said, of which I already have acquired four, in preparation for the approaching revolution."

"Approaching revolution! What——"

"*Señor*, in Madura there is always a revolution approaching. On the last one I made fifteen hundred pesos—all from spotted cows."

"How?"

"The government is pledged to pay all damages to live stock caused by a revolution, *señor*. A defunct cow, one who has died a martyr for her country, is valued at two hundred dollars. One needs but to bring to the Treasury part of its hide—attend my words, *señor—part* of its hide." El Ropo sipped his *vino* before continuing. "Such is the benevolence of a gracious Providence, *señor*, it creates cows spotted, brown upon the one side, white underneath, and even mottled upon the other side. When such hides are divided along strictly color-lines, what omniscience may any treasury official claim that he can declare the three differing sections came from one cow—and not three?" El Ropo sighed. "At one time, my brother—a very daredevil of audacity—received eight hundred dollars for a large piebald animal which had been milkless for a year."

Petty graft, for which I had no yearning. But the chance to make a friend of El Ropo and thus gain the benefit of the underground knowledge which I knew was his was too good to pass by.

"El Ropo, I thank you. At the first rumble of any trouble you come to me. I will supply the capital for a nice number of blotched bovines and we will share the profits."

"You are too generous, *señor*. I——"

"Not at all. As soon as you hear any subterranean reverberations apparently predesignating a political earthquake, you hasten to me."

For I perceived the act of wisdom for my part would be to extract from the wall safe as much of the cash and securities as I could and unostentatiously seek the seclusion of an insignificant tramp steamer bound for less turbulent territory before any new incoming government should confiscate the profits and the property of the Nueva Venicia Company.

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Perhaps because I looked for it, I seemed to discover an electric undercurrent pervading the populace during the next week. They became jumpy, or, at least, they appeared less indolent, less care-free and spontaneous as they stood chatting on street corners or in *cantinas*.

AGAINST this vague indication of impending upheaval there was the comfort of my daily drive with Ysobelita, reassuring evidence of her popularity among peon, padrone, politico and patrician. Manifestations of their love and loyalty appeared daily in the form of flowers tossed into her carriage, the smiles of little children scuttling from under her horses' hoofs and the sombreros doffed at her passing. It was a sermon on gratitude, none the less effective because of my ignorance of the language, to visit with Ysobelita the home of poverty and illness, distributing food, raiment and the solace of her smiles.

But one evening, after an afternoon thus spent with Ysobelita, a scrap of conversation in the *cantina* of the hotel brought to a focus the nebulous thoughts floating in my mind.

The conversation related to Ramon Panatella. I gathered that the rumor was that he was peeved. Panatella peeved was in itself no scarifying thought. But added to the circumstance that there had been no revolution for nearly two years, it took on serious significance.

I could see no reason for remaining in Madura until the gentleman made up his mind what to do.

How to leave inconspicuously the insurgent shores of Madura, taking with me my share or more of the lottery money? How to tempt the ravishing Ysobelita to accompany me without letting her or her father guess the why, when or wherefore of my departure? All through the stilly night I planned.

"El Ropo," I said the next morning, as the landlord and I sat in my room with the windows closed and the door open, "here are a thousand dollars with which to accumulate cows. There will be another thousand dollars for you if the results of some information I hope to get from you are satisfactory."

"*Si, señor.*" El Ropo smiled greasily.

"Is there a small seaport near here," I asked, "which one might reach unheralded and depart from unsung the middle of next week?"

The lottery drawings were to be held on Saturday of the following week.

"*Si, señor.* There is Cigaretto, a mere bay used by fishermen, seventeen miles to the south."

"But if it is a mere bay used by fishermen, I take it that no tramp steamers ever put in there."

"But yes, *señor!* I neglected to say that smugglers frequently visit it."

"Smugglers? Are you sure?"

"Why not, *señor?* My brother—my audacious, intrepid brother Bullio—commands the government's gunboat; she of the six guns. Bullio knows all the smugglers intimately."

"Well enough to ask a favor of one of them?"

"What sort of favor, *señor?* Not that it matters, but——"

"A favor to consist of receiving a passenger or two next Thursday before embarking for whatever port its skipper chooses."

"I am sure it might be arranged, *señor.* But the other thousand dollars——"

"When it is arranged, *señor.*"

"*Bueno.*"

Before taking the receipts from the sale of lottery tickets to the Executive Mansion that afternoon, I provided myself with a piece of soft wax. The president's key was the last one used to open the wall safe. It was his habit to leave it in the lock while the door remained open. If it were dislodged from the lock, gravity could be depended upon to pull it to the floor. If in the hand that picked it up there should be a piece of soft wax, an impression of the key could be obtained.

Ysobelita was with her father in the library when I entered.

"Eleven hundred and fifty to-day," I said, tossing the money on the table. The president began to count it.

Walking to the safe, I inserted my key.

"*Señor*, see here!" The president was perturbed. "A counterfeit twenty-peso bill!"

I hurried over to examine it, wondering how it had escaped my notice.

"You must be more careful, *señor*," the president continued, annoyed. "You

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

should protect us against thieves and rascals by examining every bit of money offered. Ysobelita, my dear"—he gave her his key—"be so obedient as to open the safe while we glance through the remainder of this money. I receive the minister from Brazil in five minutes."

Intently scanning the bills, still unable to account for the presence of the counterfeit, I hardly noticed Señorita Perfecto a moment later when she placed my key on the table at my elbow. The president had a trick of banding with rubber bands the money as he counted it, and it required close attention to make sure the proper amount went into each little bundle.

A few moments later, as he tossed the packets of currency into the safe, I dislodged his key. Our heads bumped squarely as we both stooped for it. Perhaps the stars he saw were more blinding than mine. At any rate, I had ample opportunity to secure the wax impression. A quick glance at Ysobelita disclosed her at a broad window, gazing over the sun-drenched executive gardens.

A moment later, the president thanked me and walked out.

"Ysobelita," I cried heatedly, "are you so enamored of this land that your happiness would shrivel and wither away in a more temperate zone if nourished and succored by the love of a strong man, shielding you from battle, murder and sudden eviction? Why not surrender the responsibilities of State for a state of responsibility confined exclusively to domestic problems? It is useless to hope for your father's consent, but, *carissima*, can't you trust yourself to me? Won't you elope with me?"

Ysobelita's eyes glowed in the cool gloom like live coals in a banked furnace fire.

"You are bold, *señor*, bold and impetuous—as a woman loves a man to be."

"You mean—you will leave with me?"

"I—I must think, *señor*. You sweep one off one's feet. Plans must be considered——"

"*Carissima*"—I kissed her white fingers—"I'll make all the plans. Be prepared to leave on next Thursday."

"I—I cannot promise—now, *señor*—but you—you may make preparations."

Flushing delicately, she quickly left the room, eluding my outstretched arms.

Round a national habit I built my plan—the habit of the daily siesta when clergy and crook, apothecary and actor, peon and politico enwrapped themselves in Morpheus's merciful arms for an afternoon hour to escape heat and conscience in *dolce far niente*. During this hour I would go to the Executive Mansion. Even should a servant or guard be awake, I would be admitted to await the president's pleasure in his library. Filling a suitcase from the wall safe I would walk slowly to the freight-yards to catch an afternoon train, the engine-crew of which would drop me off at Cigaretto.

There, El Ropo assured me, I would find a rowboat to convey me to a little steamer whose skipper was under obligations to El Ropo's brother Bullio.

"*Bueno!*" chuckled Ysobelita, when I told her freely of my plan—beginning at the point where we would board the freight-train. "But one suggestion: Would it not appear suspicious—the president's daughter on a freight train? But in my little roadster I could drive myself to meet you at Cigaretto."

"Infinitely better than my idea," I conceded.

THURSDAY morning I was up betimes. My first act was to bid Ysobelita *buenos-dios* over the telephone.

"And how is the health of *el presidente?*" I inquired.

"Poor father! Again he is confined to his room with the gout. He suffers so! So do we all."

"Convey my sympathy to him," I said, rather pleased with fate for removing my partner from active participation in that day's work.

As I finished breakfast, El Ropo approached.

"A thousand pardons, *señor*, but the thousand dollars that are to be mine——"

"Will be yours when I seize the rung of the ship's ladder," I finished. "If you cannot accompany me, I will gladly give the sum to whomever bears a note from you signed with your forgery-proof signature."

"*Bueno*," smiled El Ropo, after a moment.

Because it was the accepted thing to do, I went down to the pier and joined the chattering, laughing crowd assembled to wish

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

bon voyage to a French steamer departing for Marseilles. A long-drawn departing whistle finally shattered the stillness of the sun-filled air. As the crew began to haul in the gangplank, a cab drove furiously along the pier toward the steamer. The crew engaged in hauling in the gangplank hesitated.

Bringing his horse to a sliding stop, the cabman jumped from his box and flung open the cab door. A little, slight old lady, all in black, her snowy white hair showing through the lap of a heavy mourning-veil, hurriedly fell out. Permitting her to pick herself up, the cabman grabbed up her two traveling-bags and flung them to the deck of the steamer, already easing gently away from the pier.

With astonishing agility the little old lady in black picked up her skirts, made a running jump for the end of the gangplank hanging over the open water between pier and steamer, managed to reach it and hang on.

The cheers of the passengers joined those of the throng on the pier as, teetering up the gangplank, the little old lady reached the safety of the deck.

"Oh, *Santa Maria!*" I heard in gasping but familiar tones behind me. It was Ysobelita. A moment later she saw me. "Señor Golding," she crooned, "come! In my little roadster we will enjoy a morning drive together."

Perhaps two hours later, side by side in a cool reception-room, we looked out over the glistening sea. Far out was the blot of the French steamer, disappearing and again reappearing ever smaller in the dancing glare of sun on sea until it suddenly vanished entirely.

"The sun, it is bright—no?" smiled Ysobelita, pulling down the window-shade. Moving to the next window, she lowered its shade. As I reached for the cord of the blind on a third window, across the plaza I saw a woman shaking a red table-cloth from a second-story window. As I looked, the deep-toned bell in a cathedral began slowly pealing. A moment later other bells in different parts of the city joined their voices in insistent harmony.

In the plaza, idlers became suddenly alert. They started running, scattering in every direction, darting into doorways, disappearing, melting magically. Through the open window where I stood came a faint, uneven clatter which I recognized as the slam and echo of heavy outside shutters being secured over a thousand windows. Then, everywhere, silence, except for the bells.

Clear and sharp, a military command, a bugle call. The gates of the barracks on one side of the plaza swung open. A column of soldiers dog-trotted out, across the square and swung into a broad boulevard leading away from the bay toward the mountains.

The mountains! Ramon Panatella! Swiftly I turned. Ysobelita was gone. I called, ran to the door into the hall, called again. For answer came the excited exhaust of a motor just started. Running back to the window I saw Ysobelita's roadster race round a corner.

IN A flash came complete realization. Panatella had launched a revolution. And Ysobelita was hurrying to Cigaretto to wait for me.

Unhindered, unseen, I ran into the library. It took but a moment to open the safe. Still neatly stacked were the rubber-banded bundles. I spread a newspaper on the floor and began tossing the money on it. Making a compact package, I tied it tightly with twine, spread another newspaper on the floor and covered it with little packets from the safe.

The long screech of a locomotive whistle warned me to lose no further time.

Stopping only to stuff my inside pockets with money, I seized my two newspaper bundles and turned toward the door. The little captain of the House Guards was standing there, silently watching me. Before he could draw knife or revolver I was on him. A lucky swing found the point of his chin. He fell, rolled over like a log. An instant later I let myself out through the carriage-entrance.

I saw no one on my dash to the hotel—no police, no soldier, not even a small boy.

El Ropo admitted me to the hotel.

"It is the revolution, *señor*," he said, abnormally calm. "Perhaps it would be best to go out the back door."

Through alleys and side-streets I ran to the freight-yards. A smoking locomotive stood on the main line, tracks cleared and open in front of it. As I ran toward it,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

two men slipped out of a roundhouse and hurried toward the engine from the other side.

Clambering into the cab as we reached it at the same time, one of the men threw open the throttle.

RAPIDLY we rolled out of the yards, through the warehouse district, out into the open country, a broad meadow-land dotted with tiny farms, the grazing-ground of cattle and sheep.

The railway paralleled the wide curve of the shore between two headlands. At a shout from the fireman to his engineer, I looked out over the water. A small cruiser was gushing black smoke from her funnels, cascading white water off her prow as she raced in the same direction we were going. She was not over a mile distant when a puff of smoke from her side was followed by the detonation of a shell shot from a gun-breech. With a terrifying crash the shell exploded two hundred yards behind us.

"Shrapnel!" I yelled, as I saw the havoc it wrought. A minute later another shell dropped over the tracks behind us and loosed its fury on a small herd of grazing cattle.

But not until a third shell ripped up the tracks a hundred yards to our rear did I realize that it was I who was the target. The fact that the captain of the House Guards had recovered consciousness and swung into action in an incredibly brief time was immediately forgotten in frantic guesses as to when the cruiser would gage the range of the moving target I was riding.

An automatic, empty but formidable, kept engineer and fireman at their posts. The slower speed of the cruiser was more than compensated by the wide, deep curve we were traveling; the ship's straight course enabled her to keep abreast of us. Which was why for twelve minutes, in front, to the rear, shells fell short or overshot their mark with delirious uncertainty.

At every deliverance the thought came that the next shot would score a hit which would scatter us along the trail of the slaughtered animals behind us.

But miraculously we reached the shelter of the headland, on the opposite side of which were built the few shacks which were Cigaretto. The cruiser was cut off from view.

Landing from the locomotive on the shelving beach, I looked for Ysobelita. She was nowhere to be seen.

A man stood up in a rowboat at the water's edge and shouted to me. As I ran toward him he pointed out into the bay. There was a small steamer, steam up and anchor weighed, a rope ladder swinging idly against her shore side. But out beyond her I saw the cruiser coasting to a stop. In the brilliant sunlight a crew making ready to lower a small boat was distinctly visible.

I threw my bundles into the rowboat and took my place in the stern. As we shoved off, a white-uniformed officer stepped into the cruiser's small boat. Then came the creak of davits lowering it into the water.

"Hurry!" I waved a large bill in front of the boatman's eyes.

The precise, rhythmic sweep of the crew's oars fairly skimmed the officer over the waves between the cruiser and the tramp steamer. There was but one chance in a thousand for me to reach the steamer first. I began counting the money in my wallet, wondering how steep would be the officer's price to let me escape.

My boatman saw the money and abandoned himself to a frenzy of superhuman exertion.

I had just seized the rope ladder and was stepping out of the rowboat when the officer's boat shot round the tramp's stern and glided toward me.

"Nicely timed, eh, Señor Golding?" the officer cried heartily. "Permit me to present myself, Capitan Bullio Ropo, the brother of my brother who has himself signed this letter to you."

Weakly I counted out the thousand dollars I had promised El Ropo.

"*Muchas gracias, señor,*" smiled the captain, pocketing the money. "A pleasant voyage."

"You—you mean—that's all you wanted?" I gurgled.

"What else?"

"But—holy tripe! Why all the shooting?"

"Ah! Did not my brother tell you our cows were pastured in that territory? *Señor,* the combination of circumstances

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

connected with this revolution has been economically ideal—no? *Adios, señor!*"

LONG I stood on the deck, gazing with watering eyes at the receding shores of Madura, futilely endeavoring to reconcile myself to the loss of the one woman I had ever asked to marry me. Dismal, brooding dusk had fallen when I went into my cabin, locked the door and opened the packages to count the money which might ease but never heal the hurt to my heart.

I picked up one of the small bundles, bound with a rubber band. It crackled strangely. Examining it closer I saw on top a ten-peso bill, on the bottom a ten-peso bill, and between—pieces of thick green wrapping-paper!

Swooning, I picked up another bundle. It likewise was composed of blank green paper between a single bank-note, top and bottom. Every bundle in the package looked alike—was alike.

Certain events, casually accepted, suddenly assumed new signicance. The key I'd left in the safe door—which Ysobelita had laid on the table at my elbow after plenty of time in which to take a wax impression of it! The little old lady so desperately determined to catch the boat at the very instant of its departure! Ysobelita waiting for the steamer to drop below the horizon before drawing the blinds in the mansion; followed by the waving of the red table-cloth which set the church bells ringing in the revolution!

A knock on my cabin door interrupted my racing thoughts.

"Note from the captain, sir."

"Slide it under the door."

I first looked at the signature of the letter: "Ysobelita Perfecto."

She had written:

MY DEAR SEÑOR GOLDING:

With this explanation please accept my gratitude for your efforts, so instrumental in the achieving of my life's ambition, which will have been secured before you read this. For years Madura, my land, has been the prey of adventurers, native and foreign. It is such a nice little country it seemed a shame. But with two such powerful parties as the Nationalists and Federalists led by such bitter enemies as the Perfecto and Panatella families, peace appeared unattainable.

And then, a day in Paris when I met Ramon Panatella! Attracted to one another immediately, we discovered we agreed in all things however trivial. I was won almost before I was wooed. But the very thought of a Perfecto marrying a Panatella was, to a Maduran, unspeakable. It would mean——

Studying the subject, we gradually saw that it would mean the end of the long feud between the two families, the welding of the two greatest political parties, the termination of our destructive revolutions, the beginning of peace and security in Madura.

What to do with dear father? To induce him to leave the country a large sum of money and a revolution would be required. Ramon, my *fiancé*, could be depended upon to furnish the latter; but the necessary money——

Then I met you, *señor*—you and your Nueva Venicia plan. It was by the hand of Providence, *señor*. Ramon became immediately enthusiastic when I told him. And while the work was progressing, while the dollars were rolling in, Ramon and I also were busy, going among our people, preparing them for a bloodless revolution and a new order. They were so happy, so willing to promise to run to their homes at the first chime of the cathedral bell, and to remain there until the president's regiment should meet Ramon at the foot of the mountain and escort him to the capital.

And then, my friend, before I could take you into my confidence I learned you contemplated flight. The shopkeeper who sold you the wax brought me some exactly like it with the information. Vanished was the pleasure of telling you that Ramon had countermanded your instructions for cheapest materials and construction and, instead, was making of Nueva Venicia something permanent, praiseworthy and beautiful—so honest and practical that the profits from the lots remaining after the lottery prizes have been chosen will insure a handsome profit over the added expense Ramon insisted upon.

Señor, I hope you will remain—that you will never read this letter. However, one must be prepared. After sewing father's share of the lottery money in the lining of the old black skirt we dressed him in, I took your share, over two hundred thousand dollars, and put it in my safety-deposit box, leaving in the wall safe only the money you actually invested—twenty-five thousand dollars. When you reach Cigaretto, if you have not the bundles of green wrapping-paper, if you wait for me until I come, I shall know I have misjudged you cruelly.

If, however, you leave Cigaretto without me, if you are counting your twenty-five thousand when the captain delivers this note, I shall feel my little deceptions have been warranted.

As for the money in the safety-deposit box, *señor*—the money that is really yours if you care to return and claim it—what better use to put it to than to stock a government dairy with cows to furnish free, sweet milk to the little babies of the poor—no?

And so, perhaps, *adios*.

YSOBELITA PERFECTO.

There was no "perhaps" about it. I never went back, not even to ask El Ropo for my share of the money he collected on our spotted cattle, deceased by the only guns fired in Madura's last revolution.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The Cake-eater

There's the Thrill of the Race-Course Here —and Something to Think About, Too. When We've Eaten Our Cake and There's No More in the Larder—What Then?

By W. Carey Wonderly

THAT afternoon, ten thousand voices cheered Ronald Lowry to the echo when he rode back to the judges' stand on Colonel Applegarth's weak-legged sprinter. In the stand, Lydia Purple, too, added her homage to the new turf-idol, for, while she had played against the winner, it was her motto to follow with success, and after Lowry's ride on Mandarin, there could be no further doubt as to his skill and talent. It wasn't just racing-luck but a well-judged ride. Mandarin wasn't the favorite, but the rank and file of race-goers were quick to recognize ability, and Ronnie was literally made that afternoon.

It is just possible that the old colonel was more pleased than the boy himself at these sudden honors, for it was he who had discovered Lowry—picked him up in a country town and brought him to the great Eastern tracks. Without chick or child, and his once powerful stable reduced to a few cheap platers, Applegarth had loved Ronnie as a son long before fame dawned. Regardless of what his own record had been, young Lowry had a capable and disinterested monitor, a wise and tender teacher who never hesitated to uncover a wound for the boy's good. The two of them were uncomfortably close to actual want when Lowry drove home old Mandarin that afternoon. Following that incident, it was evident that they would never lack the small luxuries of life again, but it wasn't fortune as much as it was fame that made the colonel happy.

"You are going to be one of the great figures in the history of the American turf, my boy," he told Ronald proudly. "There is no discounting the influence on the sport of a dependable pilot, and you are that. Always remember—always ride an honest race. There are no short cuts to wealth. Your cake is before you, sufficient to last you as long as you live—if you don't try to gulp it down at a single sitting. You can't eat it and have it, Ronnie lad."

His teachings were born of a bitter experience; he was as severe as a Puritan, as watchful as a mother hen, and as tender as a young bride. At seventy, the boy was the apple of his eye. He had found something to live for.

Then came good times, and all they stand for—recognition, money, popularity—all at the great summer racing-capital under a cloudless August sky. Lowry's splendid ride on Mandarin created such a demand for his services that Applegarth was able to pick and choose his mounts. Overnight, Ronnie had become a fashionable jockey, smiled upon on Broadway, pointed out on parade, chatted about in the sporting papers. It was recorded that he was twenty-one, that Colonel Lucius Applegarth held a contract for his services, while those with eyes to see could readily perceive that he was a capable pigskin artist and, withal, a clean-cut, comely lad.

Lydia Purple was surprised to hear that Lowry had reached his majority. She had thought him much younger from seeing him both in silks and on the street with the

 Copyright, 1923, by W. Carey Wonderly

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

colonel. From behind a shop window she had watched the lad pass by, measuring his steps to his benefactor's, and she had tossed her head contemptuously. Ronnie had all the world before him, and he chose to measure strides with a septuagenarian. It seemed to her that there were no heights he couldn't rise to, no honors which mightn't be his with a clever woman to guide him. Not only had old Applegarth an unsavory repute but he belonged to another generation, with a pate full of antiquated notions.

All her life, Lydia had been fairly eaten up with ambition and thrown with failure. The daughter of Ned Purple, and motherless at four, she had known a quick succession of lean days and fat, a year at the most fashionable school in the North following upon the heels of months in an obscure boarding-house in Baltimore. Her father was the proverbial rolling stone, and Lydia had little patience with him. A popular jockey in the 'Nineties, Ned had given up riding with the advent of gray hairs and widening girth, but his operations as a turf-speculator invariably missed fire, and he and his daughter led a sort of colorful hand-to-mouth existence.

All the tracks knew them; all the regulars spoke to Ned and would have liked to speak to Lydia. She was tiny and dark, a vivid personality, with a genius for clothes and little sympathy with failure. Her father she held in good-natured contempt, criticizing alike his choice of cravats and horses. Ambitious, discontented and selfish, she settled on Ronald Lowry as the one best bet that had dawned upon her horizon.

At her insistence, Ned Purple suddenly recalled that he had known Colonel Applegarth in the good old days, and, stalking their prey in Congress Park, the two former friends presently came face to face. It was only natural that Ned should introduce his daughter and the colonel should present his boy. The young people followed while the two old chums jogged along ahead.

"WHAT'S the game, baby?" demanded Ned, when the two of them got back to their second-rate hotel.

Lydia regarded her father coldly. She had chosen his shirt and insisted on the black shoes and hose, but she couldn't supervise his hair-cuts or dissuade him from dyeing his mustache.

"There isn't any game. I don't understand you at all," she answered, after a pause. "Don't be—crude, please."

"I mean, why was you so determined to meet young Lowry?" he explained. "He don't know anything. Riding for cheap stables gets you nowhere."

Lydia didn't bother her head to answer him. She didn't say that Lowry was at the beginning of his career; she didn't add that she believed in this youth's future, and a man with a future was what she had always sought. In the past, she had refused to know jockeys and trainers. People dubbed her "stuck-up." It was recalled she had lived for a year with the daughters of first families at boarding-school. But to give Lydia her due, it must be recorded that she had refused intimacy with the men in question, not because of their business—not because Daly was a jockey and Fitzmaurice a trainer, but because Daly was an indifferent rider and Fitzmaurice an acknowledged failure in his line. She was propelled toward success, and at that particular moment Ronnie was the most promising star in the firmament.

Young Lowry liked Lydia, was proud to be seen with her, for she was interesting and smart. It would have been almost an impossibility to find any mortal more ingenuous than he, but, because Lydia was a diminutive creature, he was deceived, and felt both wise and strong in her company. Just to prove how wrong he was, and how clever was she, it is stated that Lydia always listened to all he had to say and spoke last.

By the time they were hailing him as a star in Fifth Avenue clubs and East Side saloons, Lydia had succeeded in brushing the first bloom of youth from Ronald Lowry; she had roused his emotions and taught him desire. No one could take him from her now. He listened attentively to all she had to say, and aired his own views less frequently than in the past. He was subjugated and impressed, but, in spite of his complete surrender, she refused to promise to marry him.

"But why?" cried Ronnie, failing to understand such philosophy. "You say you love me, Lydia, and I—I worship you. Things are breaking nicely. Why?"

Momentarily her eyes grew tender as they searched his flushed, handsome face.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Dear, dear boy, don't you realize that two people must have something more than an even break to start life on?" she asked. "I can get one hundred cents for my dollars, because I've had to, Ronnie; but I can't get two hundred, and even honeymoons are expensive nowadays. I feel that I'd be making a grave mistake, be false to my ideals, Ronnie, if I married you to-day. Why, you ought to be earning thousands!"

"Do you mean I'm not doing well, Lydia?" He seemed surprised.

"You aren't doing well at all, Ronald—for you," she said crisply. "Listen, dear; you are the riding sensation of the season. The other boys—who else is given a hand on parade? You are *somebody*, Ronnie—make no mistake about that. And yet—what are you doing? What have you got?" She made a little open gesture with her hands, and added quickly, "It's criminal; that's what it is!"

HIS wide, unsmiling eyes bespoke his complete mystification. Feebly he attempted to jest.

"And I thought I was king-pin, a mighty lucky fellow!"

"You are so thoughtless, so foolish that I could cry," Lydia declared—and meant it. "You ought to be collecting hundred-dollar riding-fees and picking your own mounts in the handicaps. Instead of which, you are winning with selling-platers and pocketing twenty-five dollars with a gracious 'Thank you!' The way Applegarth handles you would be ludicrous if it weren't criminal!"

Lowry's boyish face flushed as he struggled to find words to express his emotions.

"You mustn't be knocking the colonel!" he floundered. "Everything I am I owe to him. If you knew— It's a fact, Lydia, I never had a ten-dollar bill of my own until I met the colonel and he gave me my chance."

"Your chance?" She threw back her dark head and laughed unpleasantly. "He's not giving you a chance, Ronnie; he's retarding your natural growth, your actual ability. As for the ten dollars, you'll never have more as long as you stick to him. Get away—strike out—make connections with the big owners, the millionaires' stables. Whatever Lucius Applegarth has done for you, you have repaid him a hundredfold. You have proven a perfect gold mine to him—it is the talk of the place. Cut loose and go after the big work."

The color had left his cheeks; he looked older, more determined.

"I couldn't leave the colonel," he said, squaring his jaw.

"Why not?" Lydia challenged.

"For one thing, I'm under contract——"

"It isn't worth the paper it's written on—that contract," announced Lydia crisply. "I've made inquiries. You were under age when you signed it—and you did sign it. If your parents or guardians had apprenticed you, that would have been a different thing; but the contract was between you and Colonel Applegarth, and you were a minor at the time——"

"But, dear, it wouldn't be fair," Lowry broke in hurriedly, as if fearing her powers of persuasion. "It wouldn't be playing the game. When I wasn't worth my bread and butter to the colonel, he carried me along from meet to meet. He taught me to ride—and a lot of other things, too, Lydia. If I'd been his son——"

"Good heavens!" She threw up her hands in despair. "If you're going to be sentimental, Ronnie, it's time for me to run along. I detest sentimentality."

Lowry felt ashamed, properly abashed.

"He's a good old boy—old and poor, Lydia." At that moment, flushed with first love, it seemed a terrible thing to Ronnie to be old—old and alone. He glanced at the girl and his eyes flamed. "Honey," he whispered, "I feel sorry for everybody in the world but me, because there's only one you, and you have promised to marry me. Don't let's bother our heads about the old colonel to-day. Maybe this time next year he won't be here, and then——"

Shaking herself pettishly, like a wet kitten, Lydia avoided his lover's touch, turned deaf ears to his honest words.

"I don't believe you care for me at all, Ronnie Lowry!" she announced. "Either that or you are so downright foolish and simple that you don't deserve to win success. Well, I can't afford to wait for Applegarth to go to glory, if you can. What would my future be, married to a boy like you?"

"I worship you, honey——"

"There's an old saying and a true one,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Ronnie: 'When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window.' "

"It won't be poverty, Lydia!" he cried, cut to the quick.

"It will be worse—for a girl like me. I tell you, I'd rather be dead than continue this hand-to-mouth existence of the last year!" she cried passionately. "You don't know—men never feel the sting like women. If you weren't a genius and I loved you, I'd make the best of things; but since you are a genius in the saddle and I love you, I will never be satisfied with anything less than the top for you. That is final, Ronnie, and you know how badly you want me for your wife."

HE LOVED her well enough to give her words deliberate consideration, turning them over in his mind, weighing this and that until his head ached with the importance of it all. A feeling of guilt seized him, and he avoided the colonel as much as possible, though he hadn't made up his mind to leave his benefactor. They should have been very happy, these two, for they had gone whistling along with empty pockets and gnawing vitals; but presently, in spite of the golden cloud of affluence which enveloped them, the old man detected the storm-signals and spoke.

"Something's troubling you, lad," he said. "Won't you feel better for confiding in me and getting it out of your system?"

"I ought to be winning handicaps," Ronnie answered moodily.

"Well, now, and so you ought—so you shall!" retorted the old colonel kindly. "Don't hurry things, lad. Surely you believe, my boy, that I have your interest at heart. You'll make an enviable record this season, and next year—next year I have ambitious plans for you."

Lowry couldn't meet the kindly eyes.

"That's all very well, but—why not this year?" he muttered. "I—I'd rather not wait till next season, Colonel. You've got to get things now—at once—while the getting's good. There are plenty of trainers who would give me a chance with their best handicap horses. I can do 'em justice. And yet I'm—doing nothing."

"You're winning every day, Ronnie," said the old man, while a hurt expression crept over his features. "You've the best average of any rider of the meeting. You win twice to the best of the others' once. You're the star of the meet, lad."

"I only have the mount on selling-platers—the cheapest, the has-beens, the never-weres and never-will-bes. There's no money in that!" His voice rose a note. "There's no money there, Colonel. Twenty-five dollars if I win a race, and fifteen if I don't—and half the time it's me and not the horse that scores. I could be riding for the millionaires' stables. When Ted Crumpett won the Summer Final with Swan's-down, did he get twenty-five dollars? He did not! Whitely gave him a fee of a thousand dollars. Buddington's fee for winning with Tomboy was five hundred, and Asher got five hundred when he galloped home Sir Arthur. And yet their efforts were less praiseworthy than mine on a broken-down sprinter, for which I receive twenty-five dollars. God! It ain't fair!"

Lucius Applegarth heard this outburst in silence, and, his first surprise over, he placed his finger squarely on the responsible party. A little jealous, perhaps, he hadn't favored the romance between his boy and Lydia Purple, but he had tried to be fair, and he hadn't dreamed she would attempt to estrange Ronnie from him. Now he saw that she had wakened unrest in the lad, putting false values before him and—probably—poisoning his mind against him. Against him—when he would have given his few remaining years of life for the good of Ronald Lowry! The old colonel grew red with anger, but experience had taught him the futility of man's wisdom against woman's wiles, and he choked his wrath.

"I'll speak to Mr. Whiteley—I'll see what we can do, Ronnie," he said. "You're right; you should be earning big money, but—sudden wealth—I thought we were pretty comfortable, lad."

Ronnie had thought so, too, until Lydia got his ear.

It appeared unfortunate that Lowry should decide so late in the season to accept mounts in the handicaps, for it deprived the boy of some excellent opportunities and it deprived the stables of a capable rider. James Maison, the trainer for the Whiteley establishment, was most frank in his statement when he dubbed Ronnie the best jockey of the year. Gladly would he have signed the boy for his horses entered in the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

various turf classics. But the impression had got abroad that Colonel Applegarth was reserving young Lowry for his friends' entries, and so other pilots had been engaged for the big events.

There were some grounds for this statement, and it was true that Ronnie invariably had the mount on racers belonging to the colonel's friends. These sportsmen, like Lucius Applegarth, belonged to the old school and had seen better days, their charges being principally cast-offs and cripples. It took a superior rider to win with such animals, and, having such a rider, it delighted the colonel to permit him to go out and win for these old cronies. Too late he realized his mistake—that he had sacrificed Ronnie's interests on the altar of friendship.

"I'll be glad to contract for first call on Lowry's services for next season," James Maison said at the end of the interview.

"Whiteley wants you for next season, boy," the colonel told Ronnie, after his talk with the trainer. "Next season—that's what I said. It's a little late now, you know. Don't worry—I guess the wolf's gone from our door forever, lad. It's a good old world!"

In the lean days, Lucius Applegarth had challenged adversity with the same words, and Ronnie had repeated them, but now the sentiment found no echo on Lowry's lips. He was disappointed in the colonel's report, but he would have to talk it over with Lydia before he was ready to take any definite stand. She smiled all the time Ronnie was talking, and when he had finished, she laughed outright.

"Unless you cut loose from that old fossil," she declared, showing her pretty white teeth, "you may as well forget you ever had a future—or that you ever met me. I do mean it, Ronnie. I love you, but I won't marry a failure—or a coward."

"A coward?" he faltered.

Lydia shrugged her graceful, satin-clad shoulders and turned on her French heel. She had spoken her last word on the subject.

HER attitude during the week which followed was sufficient to wreck Ronnie's nerves, something he never dreamed he had possessed before. She was formally polite to him, and he couldn't stand that. Actually, he would have preferred a daily argument to this smiling refusal to touch upon the subject again. Lydia's contention was that it was useless to bandy words further, since Ronnie seemed to have made his choice and preferred to be guided by Colonel Applegarth rather than herself. But since every one had a right to his own opinion, Ronnie mustn't blame her if she exercised that right and refused to have anything to do with a future carved by a hopelessly out-of-date old man.

"If poverty is to begin at home, there is no reason for my changing my residence." She laughed with cynical brilliancy. "I am sorry, Ronnie; but I have been brought up in a bitter school, and I must look before I leap. It would be an injustice to you and to me were I to marry you the way things are at present."

There was at least a grain of truth in what she said—truth, if not gratitude—and, looking round, Lowry saw signs of easy money and sudden wealth at every turn. Ted Crumpett, contract rider for the Whiteley establishment, a youth of twenty, drove his own English-make motor-car and carried a Jap valet over the country with him. Clarence Buddington's peasantlike wife wore thousands of dollars' worth of diamonds, lived at the most expensive hotels and lost small fortunes at roulette and bridge. Sam Asher kept his parents in luxury—and Sam had been born on New York's East Side, over a shop boasting three golden balls. And yet he was receiving twenty-five dollars while they were taking down fees in the hundreds. There was no getting away from these things, and Ronnie would have been less than human if he hadn't become restless and dissatisfied under Lydia's probing.

"Buddington and Asher and Crumpett make more money in one day than I do in a week—a month!" he cried to Lucius Applegarth. "The tips Ted hands his groom are larger than I'm paid for winning a race. And—God—how I have to work to win with those old plugs!"

The colonel's eyes flashed fire.

"I know it, and the fans, the rank and file of race-goers know it, too, lad," he declared. "They are saying that you can win on a clothes-horse, Ronnie. Believe me, son, people know you can ride. Your turn will come. These chaps—Buddington,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Crumpett—are eating their white bread now. Remember the old adage about eating your cake and having it? Don't be a cake-eater. There's a to-morrow, Ronnie."

IT WAS Lowry's known ability as a rider that invariably backed his mount into favoritism in the betting, for wasn't it claimed the boy could win on a wooden animal? The colonel tried to explain that such explicit faith on the part of the public was worth more than all the exorbitant fees in Christendom, but Lydia only smiled when she heard this—a slow, superior sort of smile which maddened Ronnie. He wanted her respect as well as her love, and he knew he could have neither empty-handed; but—he couldn't quit Applegarth cold, which was what she wanted.

Striving to serve two masters, he fell between two stools. After it was over, Lydia Purple "wasn't at home" when he called at her hotel, while Lowry couldn't bring himself to go to the old colonel, who had waited for hours in the rain for the lad. That gray, blowy afternoon, with the track a sea of mud, Ronnie had been given the mount on Carolina Sunshine, a charge of one of the colonel's cronies, and, with Lowry up and the horse's known liking for the sloppy going, Sunshine ruled first choice in the betting. In the vernacular of the rail-birds, Sunshine was "jelly on the bread," and it was "all over but the shouting." The other thoroughbreds in the race were ignored as completely as if they had never been entered. Piker and millionaire had their money down on Sunshine that afternoon.

And then Frisby, who owned Phlox, another entrant in the race, came to Ronnie.

"Lowry, I have just laid five hundred dollars for you on my horse at ten to one. He's got Sunshine to beat, of course, but—five thousand dollars ain't to be sneezed at, I'll tell the world."

That was all, but it was sufficient. Ronnie knew what was expected of him if he cared to cash that bet. Five thousand dollars! He could see the flame leap to Lydia's eyes, the smile curve her tempting lips; her honeyed words and warm embrace thrilled him in memory. As he rode through the driving mist on parade, the idea fascinated him to such an extend that he already heard Lydia's applause, raised his head to catch her words of congratulation. Five thousand dollars! Without breaking faith with Colonel Applegarth, he would have earned enough to enable Lydia and him to go to housekeeping.

So, from flag-fall, Ronnie watched Phlox rather than his own mount. He went wide on the first turn, to enable the Frisby candidate to find racing-room where the track was firmest; he herded the game Fair Helen and blocked Montana in the backstretch. Ronnie was riding Phlox's race, abusing Sunshine in such a manner that he was hopelessly out of it when the field turned for home. So far so good, and Phlox was leading the way by a safe margin. But suddenly the Frisby entrant began to tire, and closing on his own courage, it looked as if Carolina Sunshine could run over him at the asking. Five thousand dollars! Ronnie saw the money almost within reach of his hand. It was madness pure and simple, for they had reached the stands by this time, and ten thousand fans saw him take back with his mount. Sunshine was thrown almost off his stride as Ronnie made a last desperate effort to check his rush and give the purse to Phlox. Literally, Sunshine lost several lengths, but the sacrifice was in vain, for Phlox was through and dropped back, beaten, while Montana came on to snatch the verdict by a nose.

Following the race, Lowry was set down for rough riding, with the statement that his case would be referred to the Jockey Club. But it wasn't rough riding he was guilty of, and Ronnie knew it, and he knew the stewards knew it. Really, he was through, and undoubtedly he would be ruled off the turf for life for his fraudulent ride on Carolina Sunshine. He had sacrificed his career, lost the respect and liking of the world he lived in, and was empty-handed in the bargain. Five thousand dollars gone up in smoke!

Ronnie went directly from the track to Lydia's hotel and was told Miss Purple wasn't in her room. Ronnie knew better, but he also knew better than to insist on an interview. He rushed out in the wet, cold night, on to the next town and the railroad station. Somebody saw him board the express and recognized him, for, following the wreck and the firing of the débris, there was a maimed and charred body

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

identified as Ronald Lowry, and as such buried in the Albany hills.

RONNIE found his way to England, and he was galloping horses there for Lord Trenholme when the great holocaust swept over Europe and there was an urgent call for men for France. Lowry joined up and served neither better nor worse than the average Tommy, fared even better than many, for, while Hun shells had disfigured him for life, he had escaped with that life which seemed so worthless to him. When the fighting was all over and he came back to England, it was to learn that Lord Trenholme had died on the field. For a moment he was stunned, unnerved; his lordship had provided him with bread and butter, at least. But the little lady in weeds, whom he knew to be Trenholme's widow, greeted him kindly. She had planned to keep up the racing establishment herself. A little later, because she was an American by birth, perhaps, Lady Trenholme decided to take her thoroughbreds to the States, and Ronnie was offered the opportunity to go along as groom and exercise-boy.

Almost five years to the day he had left, Ronnie Lowry came back to America as Tom Steuart, and since they were racing now, as then, at the summer capital, found himself once more upon the scene of his rise and downfall. Lady Trenholme was very gay and smart; she was connected with great families and had splendid fortunes at her command. Her stable cut little figure on the day's program, but she was wonderfully popular, generous to a fault and had tremendous influence. "Lady Tren," the rank and file called her, and Ronnie was out galloping her ladyship's horseflesh under the very eyes of the officials.

Things and people had changed so little during his exile that Ronnie had difficulty in making himself believe that five years had come and gone since last he was here. At first, he had been timid and afraid to venture out, silent of lip and quick of step. He never lingered round the stables; he avoided the public places in the town. And yet a glance in his mirror should have calmed his fears, for he had changed until all the boyhood seemed to have died within him. Shot and shell had torn his face, and doctors had rebuilt it; at twenty-six, his hair was flecked with gray; the left foot dragged a little. And as if this physical change wasn't sufficient disguise, Lady Tren, in her extravagant way, praised him as a great hero who had been in her husband's employ for "ages" before the war.

After the first few days, then, Ronnie realized he was safe and began to look round. He'd crawl out to the rail and watch the races, and it was significant that his most severe criticism was for the jockeys. Observing their feeble efforts, he asked himself if he had belonged to the same profession, if he, five years ago, had been such a weakling and an imbecile? It was hard to believe. And then, as if in answer to his question, the spindle-legged groom next to him condemned all present-day riders to perdition and praised the name of—Ronnie Lowry.

"You mustn't hold these numskulls against us, Britisher," he groaned. "We had 'em if I can't show 'em to you to-day—real pigskin artists. You should have seen Lowry. He could win with a clothes-horse, the very finest jockey in the breadth of the land, when he was took off, sudden—killed in a railroad accident—smashed and then burned; the wreckage caught fire. He was a pippin, R. Lowry was. Could bet your last nickel on his mount."

Ronnie's words sounded unusually loud to his own ears.

"This—Lowry, then, was never in hot water?"

"Never!" emphasized the groom. "He rode clean as a whistle."

Only half convinced, Ronnie began to make cautious inquiries, but from every lip he heard the same story—Lowry was the great American rider of a decade, straight as a die, honest as the day is long. This splendid record was held up as a shining example to all the young apprentice-boys, who were urged to emulate his methods. Ronnie wasn't deceived for a moment. If the great public believed the jockey to have been a model of skill and integrity, the racing officials knew better, and sponsored the pretty tradition for the good of the sport.

As time went on and his nerves steadied themselves, Ronnie looked round him for familiar faces, faces that had never been absent from his thoughts. But he passed

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Colonel Applegarth several times before he found the courage to speak. The old man spent most of his time on a bench in the sun, unnoticed and unnoticing, and when he said anything, it concerned the dim past. How he lived wasn't quite clear. At seventy-five he was quite alone in the world, his once fine stable reduced to a single thoroughbred, and that a cheap selling-plater, presented to him by a group of friends who pitied him. This horse raced occasionally and had never been in the money, so that there were those who doubted if it was an asset. Unable to keep away, the very sight of this broken old man in the sun was torture to Ronnie. All the colonel's kindnesses, his paternal love and care were heaped like coals of fire on the boy's head. He watched him—watched him and wondered what he should do.

There was Lydia Purple, too, still wending her way through the crowds in an effort to catch up with Dame Fortune. Her father had died two winters ago in Havana, and Lydia, alone, was pursuing the only career she knew. A little older, a little harder, with unmistakable rouge on her olive cheeks, she had reached that point of being nice to trainers and jockeys and hangers-on, accepting tips from any source, desperate as the years rolled by. Ronnie, knowing the type she represented, wasn't surprised to find her here, for all the regulars—those who made a living by following the races—came to the spa for August. What he didn't grasp, however, was the subtle change in the girl—that her costumes, which in the long ago stamped themselves from Paris, were now cheap imitations. Lydia was no longer smart, though there were those who dubbed her "classy."

RONNIE took courage to speak to her one day, mentioning a horse which was being touted for a sure thing in the fifth race. Lydia was pathetically grateful and asked him to lay a bet on the horse for her—to place. That she was no longer willing to take a chance with her money, that she played a horse second instead of first disclosed her true financial condition more completely than words could have done. Ronnie was stunned, unnerved. Long ago he had gotten over the hurt of her refusal to see him that day five years before. Countless excuses could be found for her, and he forgave much, choosing to remember the warmth of her smile rather than the coldness of her heart. When the tip won, and he knew she would cash her bet, he was overcome with relief, and limped away, mighty thankful.

After that, he saw her frequently, at the track, on the street, always smiling and vivacious, always seeking information. Once she borrowed a little money—when she happened to "leave her purse behind at the hotel." She called him "Mr. Steuart." That she was making a desperate effort to keep afloat in the swirl of the maelstrom, Ronnie guessed, and his heart ached at the subterfuge, the inventions and excuses which he saw through so readily.

Until after the race he won with the colonel's plater, Ronnie believed that Lydia's interest in him was purely of a business turn—the distressed human seeking a friend. About this time they had fallen into the habit of speaking—the colonel and Ronnie—when the younger man passed the bench in the sun. The track was lightning fast at present, or Morvich had worked sensationally in recent trials. Lucius Applegarth listened, nodded, and smiled. It had been a long, long time since any one had gone out of his way to be civil to him, and he began to wait and watch for this pleasant-voiced, battle-marked Englishman.

Then Ronnie heard that the colonel had entered his plater in one of the cheapest races of the meeting, and after looking over the entrants and working out the Applegarth candidate, he went to the old man with a request. The conditions of the race were framed for maiden jockeys, boys who had never had a winning mount, and T. Steuart, with an apprentice license, was eligible for the honors.

"If you'll let me ride Valiant to-morrow, Colonel, I'll win him out for you," he said. "Go and pawn your clothes, if necessary, and bet the money on your horse, sir, for I'll win him out if you'll give me the mount."

After a long and honorable career on the turf, Lucius Applegarth had found himself in the position where the question of bread and butter became the chief concern of the day. Ronnie found him pathetically eager to do his bidding, but when the time came to make the wager, three hundred dollars

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

was every penny the colonel could scrape together.

"I believe you'll win for me, lad, and here is my little fortune," murmured the old man. "If we cash the bet, half of the money goes to you."

Ronnie didn't stop to argue the point with the colonel. That he was able to place the money at the liberal odds of twelve to one robbed him of all desire for speech and sent him to the paddock with a grim determination to square things with old Lucius or die in the attempt. Valiant was a sorry old fellow, and T. Steuart was practically an unknown name to the rank and file of race-goers. Somebody remembered that the battle-scarred jockey was a Britisher connected with Lady Tren's stable, and somebody else recalled that Valiant hadn't won a race in a year—which, in part, was responsible for the liberal odds quoted against the pair.

FROM flag-fall, Ronnie discovered that he had set himself a stiff task, and Valiant, away last, showed no inclination to run in the first sixteenth. The field dashed past the stands with the Applegarth candidate bringing up the rear, and Ronnie, feeling the colonel's eyes upon him, grew panicky for the moment and drew his whip. Then, out of the corners of his eyes, he saw that this was exactly what the other riders were doing, and there was a long way to go. These green youngsters had better horses under them, but he—R. Lowry—had the experience. He put up his whip, steadied his mount and plowed on.

Half-way down the back-stretch, the leaders were through, their jockeys having made the mistake of attempting to race them over a mile route on a single breath. The rail-runners were being pocketed; unskilled hands carried their charges wide at the turns. All this time Ronnie was taking Valiant along on the outside, where there was clear sailing, and while the old horse never bettered his fifth position, he was running fairly well, with something in reserve for the stretch-dash.

At the last corner, the chief contenders were carried wide by the leader, and Ronnie stole through on the rail, saving five or more lengths by the move—though the others weren't through, as he learned when he sat down and began to ride for dear life, using hands and heels in the manner which had made Lowry famous years before. One by one, Valiant picked up the leaders and ran over them, with only the Templeton colt to head; but already Ronnie felt his mount weaken under him, and with the finishing-line a dozen yards away, he thought he could never make it. The colt was pounds the better; it was superior horsemanship alone that turned the trick in favor of the Applegarth thoroughbred, and Ronnie was obliged to lift Valiant fairly over the wire. The finish was so dramatic, so thrilling that ten thousand men and women rose to their feet and cheered, cheered and cried the name of the jockey, not of horse. Ronnie heard it again, the old cry, and while the name was "Steuart," not "Lowry," he knew it was for him, and the scene about him blurred and rocked. His fingers were all thumbs; his hands trembled so that he could hardly unsaddle his mount when he rode back to the scales.

Colonel Applegarth followed him to the stables with a carefully prepared speech: "Young sir, I am greatly indebted to you—" But the words wouldn't come. Under the drooping white mustache, the old lips trembled. Ronnie understood and sprang to get him a chair.

"It's all right, sir," Ronnie said; "and it's all right about the fee, too. Lady Trenholme's compliments, Colonel, and she is happy to have had me ride Valiant to-day. Twelve to one, sir, and three hundred dollars played. Would you like me to go with you in the morning to the savings-bank?"

Still trembling in every muscle, the colonel's eyes never left the Britisher's face.

"That ride——"

"Beg pardon, sir?"

"That finish you rode——"

"Yes, sir. He just lasted, Colonel."

A groom came forward to take the horse, and a little group of followers closed round them. An expression of great cunning crept into the parchmentlike face, and Lucius Applegarth drew himself erect, spoke in his loudest, most formal voice.

"I thank you, Steuart. It was a well-judged ride."

Ronnie woke the next morning to find the town buzzing with his horsemanship. The local paper lauded him to the skies,

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

but it remained for the New York contemporary, the acknowledged mouthpiece of the turf world, to honor him with the crown long sacred to one Ronnie Lowry. Said that powerful organ:

The most hopeful sign of the fast-closing season was the ride yesterday of T. Steuart, on Colonel Lucius Applegarth's weak-legged racer, Valiant, who took down the purse in the fourth event. Under less skilful handling, this old fellow would undoubtedly have finished last instead of first, and the exhibition of superior riding ability put up by Steuart was quickly recognized by the large crowd present. But just how good this ride was possibly wasn't guessed by many of the most enthusiastic. The finish must have reminded old-timers of the splendid stretch runs made by that prince of pigskin artists, R. Lowry, who was killed in a railroad wreck five years ago. If T. Steuart can do as well again—and we don't believe his ride on Valiant was a fluke—he is the first boy since the untimely taking-off of young Lowry who is capable of filling that ace's boots. T. Steuart is an Englishman, a veteran of the war, and brought to this country in the stable of Lady Trenholme, for whom he rode previous to his fighting-days.

Locked away from spying eyes, Ronnie read this comment in the seclusion of his room. Then, with the words stamped indelibly on his mind, he tossed aside the paper and began to walk his room with some of the spirit of the caged jungle-beasts. He knew he had ridden well yesterday, he knew he could ride as well again, but—did he dare to continue in the saddle? Discovery meant banishment forever, for there was no doubt in T. Steuart's mind that, had he lived, R. Lowry would have been ruled off the turf for life. Once identified as Lowry, the boy knew that his very living would be snatched from him, for it was highly probable that for the deception he would be denied even the privilege of exercising horses on the tracks.

"I'll never ride again," he said to himself. "I only did that for the colonel. He's fixed; he'll never want for a dollar again as long as he lives. I did that for him."

But even with the thought there came a message from Lady Trenholme, commanding him to her hotel at noon. With Lady Tren was her trainer.

"I am going to give you the mount on all of my best racers, Steuart," she told Ronnie. "We are proud of your skill, and you shall have every opportunity in the saddle to place you in the very front rank of present-day riders. It has been the fashion to send American riders to England to pilot the Derby favorites and what-not; now England will lend America an ace."

There was no escape from the situation—a situation of his own making, by the way. They put him up on the Trenholme thoroughbreds, and he had to ride. Just at first he considered the consequences of losing with these racers, but his love of the sport itself was too strong, and when he felt a real runner under him, Ronnie had to do his best. And this best, as all the sporting world knew, was a very powerful, most dependable thing. He rode to win, and, idolized by the fans, was hailed affectionately on parade as "the Britisher." When his mounts came thundering through the stretch, nosing out favorites, second choices and long shots, the rank and file shouted themselves hoarse, rooting for the Britisher!

"Though I'm not," Ronnie said to himself, with bitterness in his heart. "I'm not at all. I'm just a cheat!" And then he recalled the colonel's words of long ago, and added: "I'm a cake-eater, and have swallowed my feast at a single gulp. This belongs to another."

THE colonel came to Ronnie, anxious to share his wager on Valiant.

"I can't accept it, sir; it's against her ladyship's orders," said Ronnie. "I should be indebted to you—it was your mount that gave me the chance to prove my ability. I was thinking, sir, wouldn't it be a good idea to put your money into an annuity?"

Old Lucius Applegarth nodded eagerly.

"Yes, yes; as you say, lad."

"And then neither race nor speculate again, sir—" ventured Ronnie.

"As you like, as you say—yes," agreed the colonel.

Ronnie refrained from meeting his glance, a glance which was hungry and pleaded for recognition.

"There's something very comfortable in the feeling that you're fixed for life, sir," he observed carelessly, as he turned away.

The old man put out a detaining hand.

"That you should care for me! That you should think of me!"

"You've been very kind, sir. The mount on Valiant——"

"That you still care—maybe you've always cared!" breathed the old man.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Ronnie raised his eyes, understood and hesitated. It was this pause which gave the colonel hope, for he leaned forward, fingers working convulsively, and whispered:

"My boy! For it *is* my boy, and not the Britisher that I owe my bed and bread to—my present independence."

It was a dangerous moment, and Ronnie, realizing that the whole future hung on his next words, fought back the old man with icy formality.

"I did the best I knew how. It was a pleasure for me to win with your horse, sir."

However, it was another thing to escape from the memory of Colonel Applegarth's words. The colonel knew! In public, and before others, old Lucius displayed a cunning that was most praiseworthy, ignoring Ronnie pointedly and doing his utmost to drown the plaudits of others in recalling tales of Lowry. This Englishman was all very well, but he wasn't R. Lowry, declared the artful colonel.

But his was only one voice against many, and one very old, very weak voice at that. The Britisher's name and fame was on every lip, and there seemed no limit to his popularity and success. Since he was just a human, neither wholly good nor wholly bad, he liked and hated this condition of affairs. It thrilled him like a kiss to win, and frightened him, too. As if to lessen the chances of detection, Ronnie avoided both the colonel and Lydia more than formerly, though there is little doubt that he rode to win for them.

A DAY came when Lydia Purple sent him a prettily worded note, asking him to call upon her at her hotel. Satisfied that she wasn't in need, since she followed his mounts religiously and he invariably won, Ronnie hadn't seen her recently. Her note sent a cold chill down his spine. What did it signify? Had she penetrated his disguise, like the colonel, and if so, what then?

Sitting opposite Lydia in a secluded corner of the veranda, Lowry was impressed afresh with the great change which time had wrought in this girl. It wasn't only the rouge and the clothes; this once proud woman looked subdued.

"There will be some good things at Belmont," Ronnie ventured during a pause.

Lydia sighed.

"Only, I don't think I shall be at Belmont," she said. "I—well, you see, I am—very tired. Frankly, this is no life for a woman. I became interested in horses because my father was interested in racing; but now that he is dead—I have been thinking it over, and this is the end, my last meeting. I shall—well, I don't know what exactly, but I shall give up the ponies. After all, a woman's place is in the home."

Her words moved him strangely, and he felt a lump climb into his throat, while the world of might-have-been danced before his vision. It was what he had pleaded for in the past, what he had always wanted—a home. After these years of aimless wandering, of hard knocks, she, too, wanted a place to call her own.

Quick to sense the psychological moment, Lydia placed her finger-tips on Ronnie's sleeve.

"I shall be in New York, however," she said in a voice that suggested a whisper. "When you go to Belmont, you must come and see me, boy."

"I should like to!" he cried, with a little catch in his breath. "Lydia, I, too, feel the need of a home. This—this can't go on. I can't explain to you now," he added hurriedly, "but I can't continue in this business. I have got to get out, go away. I have planned to accompany Lady Tren's stable to Belmont, but probably before that—I shall have quit the game."

She leaned toward him anxiously, and under the rouge he saw her pallor.

"Quit the game?" she repeated. "Why, what do you mean?"

"Just what I say. It must come sooner or later."

There was a pause.

"And then?" she hazarded, lifting troubled eyes to his face.

"I don't know," Ronnie confessed.

"But that is nonsense! There is no reason why you should get out of the business. Listen—listen, boy! The world is your oyster. People like you—you have powerful influence behind you. Lady Tren—no one questions her, and she swears in her silly, fashionable way that you have been in the Trenholme employ for years—ten, a dozen, maybe. The time is ripe for a clean-up, and in a couple of years—in three, at most—you are as safe as a church. Don't be a

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

fool! A little while longer, and then—the home you've dreamed about——"

He could feel her breath on his cheeks, and her fingers slid down his sleeve to his hand, creeping birdlike into his calloused palms. For a minute only he hesitated, and then he removed her hands deliberately and rose to his feet. Pity fled, and a deep disgust took its place; for he sensed now that she was wooing success as ardently as ever a lover wooed the object of his affections. It was fame and money, not the man, not the home she wanted. She knew; Lydia knew him, and she urged him to go on cheating, to continue his lying, thieving way until they had feathered their nest.

She failed to fathom the cryptic smile he flashed her as he turned to go. His sudden departure she put down to nervous excitement, to a desire to be alone and figure it out for himself. Voice and manner were triumphant as she followed him down the porch to the street.

"I shall hear from you soon, boy? Don't make it long, will you? I have waited six years for to-day."

"You will hear something shortly," he promised.

RONNIE was to ride, that afternoon, one of the Trenholme horses on which he knew the stable was wagering heavily. Arriving at the track, he was in the lowest spirits, savage toward the world, undecided in mind, wavering, wondering, loathing. And then the colonel sought him out, approached him with shifty glance and all the pitiful cupidity of the very old. He had a favor to ask; he wanted to know if "Tommy Steuart" would accept the mount on Valiant to-morrow.

"I have great faith in the Britisher," whined the old man. "There'll be a bet down for you, and we'll clean up——"

Ronnie's eyes narrowed.

"I thought you were done with racing?" he said. "Your winnings and the purse the other day were to be used for an annuity, and you talked of settling down quietly— Good God!" He wiped the sweat from his brow. "I'd give ten years of my life to go away and settle down quietly myself, Colonel." He looked at him with his soul, and saw reflected in Lucius Applegarth's face a gleam of cunning which sickened him.

"In a little while, laddie. Another wallop, and then—aye, boy; I only wager when the Britisher rides, the great Tommy Steuart." The old voice cackled feebly. "It's a great life, boy, if we don't weaken."

"Yes; but when we've eaten our cake, Colonel, what then?" asked Ronnie, and waited breathlessly for the answer.

Applegarth's voice dropped to a whisper.

"If there's more cake in the larder, we can help ourselves to a second slice."

The words came like a blow, and Ronnie drew back, as if to escape their sting. Turning abruptly on his heel, he said over his shoulder in muffled tones,

"I sha'n't be able to take your mount to-morrow," and walked away without a backward glance.

They applauded him on parade that afternoon. Even before the running of the race, the crowded grand stands gave him proof of their confidence and esteem, but each hand-clap, each cheer came like a separate hail of bullets, and he winced under the welcome of the fans as he had never winced in Flanders.

"If they knew!" he thought. "I'm *not* the Britisher, and God knows it isn't Ronnie Lowry who's sporting silks this afternoon—Lowry's dead and gone. If they knew, they'd jeer and claw—or wouldn't *they* care, either, so long as I went on winning races for them?"

It was an ugly thought, and he found himself laughing aloud.

T. Steuart won the race with Thistledown, for Lady Tren had wagered heavily on her entrant; and Lady Tren had been wonderfully kind to him. Ronnie drove his mount home in front, weighed in, and waited until the result was made official. Then, with the applause still ringing in his ears, he walked up the steps to the steward's stand, pulled off his gay, silken cap, and stated his case.

"I want you to know that it isn't the Britisher at all—it isn't T. Steuart that the folks out in the stands are cheering," he said. "I—I didn't die. I sneaked back, and I've cheated and lied and got away with it; but I want you to know now, and to take me to the gate and turn me out, never to come back. I can't go on any longer—I'm Lowry himself, R. Lowry, and I've eaten my cake!"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Adventures A-plenty in a Search for Treasure

The Bucoleon Treasure

The Search for Betty Takes the Treasure-Hunters Again to Tokalji's Den, with Results That Go Far Beyond Their Expectations and Bring the Great Adventure to a Glorious Finish

By Arthur D. Howden Smith

Illustration by Ralph Pallen Coleman

Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

THE news that Betty King had been abducted and was undoubtedly a prisoner in Beran Tokalji's house on the site of the Bucoleon Palace, and fronting on a mean little street called Sokaki Masyeri, was an altogether unexpected development in our adventure and spurred us to instant schemes for rescue. Betty and her father, Vernon King, who was my uncle, were deeply interested in our project, and King's expert knowledge of old Constantinople—he was a noted archeologist—had been of very material assistance. For we had embarked on an enterprise which has ever excited men's imagination in the highest degree—a search for buried treasure.

There were four of us: Hugh, Baron Chesby; Nikka Zaranko, a famous violinist; Watkins—"Watty"—Hugh's faithful valet, and myself, John Nash, a plain American. Hugh, Nikka and I had been war-time pals, and we had parted on the understanding that the call of adventure and danger would bring us together again. And such a call had come, for Hugh had determined to retrieve the fortunes of his family by gaining possession of the Treasure of the Bucoleon. This was the vast horde of specie and jewels amassed by the Byzantine emperor, Andronicus Comnenus, through rapine and extortion, and buried by him somewhere in the Bucoleon Palace. Its location had been confided to Hugh's Crusading ancestor, for between the two men a strong friendship had developed. In the English baronial family this secret had been lost for a long period, to be recovered—at least partially—by Hugh's uncle, James, his predecessor in the title, who was assassinated just as he had completed plans for going after it.

Unfortunately, there were others who knew of the treasure—and were just as anxious as we were to get hold of it. A tribe of Gipsies, now headed by Tokalji, had long guarded its supposed site, and with them were associated an organized band of international criminals under the leadership of one Toutou Lafitte. His associates were two Russians who passed as brother and sister, Count Serge Vassilivich and Countess Sandra Vassilievna; Hilmi Bey, a Levantine; Montague Hilyer, an Englishman, and his wife, and a dark woman of Latin type who spoke like an

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

American and called herself Hélène de Cespedes.

Toutou and his gang had been hot on our trail, and many a thrilling encounter we had had with them in England, on the way to Turkey, where Nikka's uncle, Wasso Mikali, had been added to our party, and now in Constantinople. Nikka and I, in disguise, had managed to get into Tokalji's house and into his good graces, in which performance we were aided by the fact that Tokalji's foster-daughter Kara took a violent fancy to Nikka. Things were progressing well—we had located the supposed site of the treasure—until Toutou and his crowd discovered and exposed us. Held as prisoners and subjected to torture, we were rescued by Watty, who forced his way from the water-front into our place of captivity through an old drain which he and the Kings discovered.

But now Betty, to whom Hugh had just announced his engagement, had been carried off—taken under Watty's very eyes—from the *Curlew*, a launch used by Professor King on his archeological expeditions. Once more, therefore, we must get into Tokalji's, and by way of the drain was the only practical way in which to do it.

IT WAS beginning to rain when we left the hotel, with occasional peals of thunder; but we welcomed the change in the weather as a factor aiding the surprise attack we intended. At the Galata end of the lower bridge, which was deserted, as usual, after dark, we dismissed our taxi and held a final brief council of war in a patch of shadows next the bridge abutment. King, Hugh, Watkins and I were to embark on the *Curlew*, while Nikka and Wasso Mikali tramped to the khan of the Georgians and rallied Mikali's six young men. Then they were to go to Sokaki Masyeri and wait for a pistol-shot, which would be the signal that we had passed through the drain and were at grips with the enemy.

The rain let up as we shook hands and wished each other luck, but by the time the *Curlew* was chugging down the Golden Horn, it had set in again with tripled violence, lashed on by a northeast gale. At intervals, broad splotches of lightning bathed the city to our right in a ghastly greenish glow. And when we emerged into the Bosporus, we found a fairly high sea running, but the launch thrust her bow into the waves and rode buoyantly over them. We cautiously felt our way along, lights out, motor running at half-speed.

I was worried by the frequency of the lightning displays; but fortunately, as we sighted the round tower on the walls, which was our first landmark for Tokalji's house, there was a lull in the storm. We were also favored in having the old sea-walls to act as a lee for us as we worked in closer to shore. The waves moderated here, and the fish-hook curve of the ruined jetty broke their remaining force. When Watkins had made fast to a couple of chunks of battered masonry, the *Curlew* floated almost as easily as at her moorings by the man-o'-war dock.

The rocks of the jetty were awash, and it was as much as your life was worth to slip, for a fall might mean a broken head or limb. At one point, indeed, several of us lost the jetty altogether and were obliged to swim half a dozen strokes to the beach. Watkins, who insisted on arming himself with a crowbar, would have drowned if Hugh had not hauled him in by the scuff of the neck. It was impossible to see anything, except when a lightning flash streaked the sky, and then we were so afraid of being seen that we kept very close to the rocks.

The beach, like the jetty, was under water. The waves lapped up to the foot of the walls, and we stumbled desperately over submerged boulders. Watkins, ahead of me in line, tripped and very nearly knocked my brains out with his infernal crowbar. I begged him to drop it, but he doggedly refused.

"I'm no knife-fighter, Mr. Jack, sir," he said, "and I'm intending to give the persons that 'it me a taste of their own stew like."

We identified the opening of the sewer by the hollow, booming sound with which, every now and then, an unusually high wave would roll over its lip. The rain was driving down again, and the wind blew overhead with shrill vehemence.

"We'll never be able to get through that 'ell-'ole to-night, Mr. Jack, sir!" screamed Watkins in my ear. "We'll be drowned along with the rats."

I was somewhat of Watty's opinion, myself, but managed to placate him. Hugh, without any hesitation, yelled, "One at a time!" and slipped into the sewer-mouth

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

between two waves. King followed him, and Watty and I brought up the rear. We were cheered to find the place less terrifying than we had imagined it. The water was thigh-deep, instead of knee-deep, as it had been when we escaped from the dungeon; but once you had fumbled your way by torchlight over the jagged moraine that blocked the first thirty feet, the footing became safer and the water more shallow. But the atmosphere was slimy, noisome, unclean. And always there was the "drip-drip-drip" of water.

We breathed more comfortably when our torches revealed overhead the bars of the stone grating in the floor of the dungeon.

"All quiet above," whispered Hugh, after listening intently. "Dark as hell, too. I say—how much farther do you suppose this drain goes?"

"I am inclined to believe it continues into the city, probably as far as the site of the Forum of Theodosius," King replied, his scholar's interest awake. "That was a region of palaces which would have required such a work of engineering. It should be well worth exploring."

"Never mind that now," said Hugh. "We have another task on hand."

He pried up the grating with Watty's crowbar, the butt of which we rested on the ledge in which the grating fitted. This secured a space sufficiently wide for us to squeeze through, and after all of us had climbed up, we eased the grating back into its bed, so that there was no trace remaining of our entrance.

THE lower passage and cellars were deserted, but as we climbed the stairs leading to the central-hall opening on the little atrium between the Garden of the Cedars and the large chamber which Tokalji occupied, we heard a distant murmur of voices in disagreement. Investigation proved the hall to be unoccupied, and we were presently grouped on its uneven floor, with only a curtain separating us from the drama proceeding in the atrium. The rain was drumming down overhead; the wind howled with undiminished force, and at intervals the thunder boomed.

"No; you are wrong, Toutou. It is everybody's business," said Hilyer in French.

"You may be chief, but you have no right to risk common property," protested Sandra's resonant voice.

Toutou snarled something in his guttural, indistinct, animal speech.

"Like her, and that's enough," it concluded. "I'm tired of the rest of you. Bunglers—every one."

"Have it your own way," said Serge; "but it's not business. She's worth so much to us."

"One might suppose you a green youth," cut in Maude Hilyer's frigid tones. "Why should you endanger our *coup* for a colorless chit like——"

"I say there is no risk!" snapped Toutou. "What do I care for them? What does it matter what they——"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Hilyer; "but you Continentals don't appreciate the Anglo-Saxons' feeling about their women. You——"

"Have done!" bellowed Toutou, with a sudden flame of temper. "Urrr-rr-rrhhh! Am I not the master? I want her, and I shall have her. Go, go, I say, or you shall behold Toutou's knife!"

They evidently went, for we could hear the shuffling of feet, with an undercurrent of muttered curses and objurgations. Hugh started forward, pistol in hand, but I checked him. This was no time for unpremeditated action. There was a moment of silence—and a woman's cry of hatred.

"Leave me alone, you beast! If you touch me, I'll bite you! You can't bind my teeth. Ah——"

It was Betty's voice, and Hugh shook my hand off and was at the curtain with his hand on the folds before I could reach him. But reach him I did, and another interruption helped me to restrain him. King, his face white and his hands shaking, joined us. Watkins lurked behind.

"Let me—" gasped Hugh.

"There's plenty of time, you fool!" I hissed. "Wait! Somebody——"

I was going to say that somebody might come back, and the somebody cut my sentence in the middle. A door opened, and the voice of Hélène de Cespedes spoke.

"What is this I hear, *mon ami?*" she asked. "Are you mad? This girl is the spoil of the band. She belongs to all of us. We are holding her for a bigger stake. Shall we let you have her for your own satisfaction? You take too——"

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"You are jealous," snarled Toutou. "I say I want her, and I am going to have her. I am tired of women like you."

HUGH, his nerves under control, gently parted the folds of the curtain with his pistol-muzzle. The atrium was brilliantly lighted. He and I could see perfectly. On a divan heaped with cushions lay Betty. Her hands were bound behind her, and her feet were tied loosely. Her hair was rumpled, and her blouse was ripped off at the shoulder. But her eyes sparked fire as she stared fearlessly at the monster who stood beside her.

Toutou was in a different mood from any I knew, or, rather, I should say, from the one I knew. His sinister face revealed the latent ferocity that was the salient feature of his character, but with it there was something else—something difficult to define. The tigerish glare in his eyes was replaced by a softer light; the pupils were expanded. He hovered over Betty, looking almost fearfully at Hélène.

She stood just inside the door that communicated with the large outer chamber. She was dressed in a sport suit and high boots. Her hat was off, and her face showed pinched and wan. There were shadows under her eyes.

"Say I am jealous," she answered steadily. "I have a right to be. You have never had a woman who did more for you than I. Do you think Miss Innocence here would do what I have done?"

"That is why I want her," returned Toutou, his voice singularly hoarse. "I am tired of you. I am tired of all of you. I hunger for innocence. I wish to forget crime and evil. When we finish this job, I am going to take this *petite* and go away where Toutou will be unknown."

"Toutou Lafitte a reformed character!" Hélène laughed sarcastically. "You don't know what you are talking about. You have nothing in common with innocence."

"Who knows?"

"I know, *mon ami*. The girl would kill herself first. Sooner than see you do this, I will kill you."

Toutou frowned at her.

"Stand back!" he warned. "If you touch her——"

Hélène stepped forward boldly.

"There are many things you can do, Toutou," she said. "And you are chief. Nobody questions that. But remember that if the others are afraid of you I am not. And I say that you shall not do this. Something you owe to the band. More, still, you owe to me. You know me well enough to appreciate that I intend to secure what I consider due me."

Toutou growled in his throat.

"It is time you feared me," he snarled. "Go away—I am through with you! I never wish to see you again. You shall have your share of this *coup*—then you shall leave the band."

"But I thought there was to be no more band," sneered Hélène. "I thought Toutou was to become an honest *bourgeois*, with a dove-cot——"

"You shall feel my knife!" he barked at her.

"Why should I fear your knife?" she retorted. "The last time a woman threatened you, you fled from her knife."

Her face was white with rage, and Toutou's whole frame seemed to draw together as an animal does when it prepares to spring. His long arms curved before him, his right hand at the level of his belt.

"You do not know when a man tires of you, it seems!" he exclaimed. "Can you not see we wish to be alone?"

She made a violent effort to regain her self-control.

"For the last time," she said quietly, "will you heed the opinion of your colleagues and leave this girl alone?"

"No!" he growled savagely. "Go, you——"

"Look out!" cried Betty, who alone of us all could see clearly what Toutou was doing with his right hand. "His knife!"

Hélène snatched a pistol from her blouse, but he was too quick for her. As the flame spurted from the barrel he leaped aside, and his immensely long arm curled out and slashed down. The knife clicked on her collar-bone, and she dropped, choking, to the floor.

In the same instant Hugh fired, but one of us jostled him and the bullet missed. Toutou turned, saw the curtain swaying as we charged, and ran for the door. I fired once, and the bullet chipped between his arm and side, but he was out before we could shoot again.

From the courtyard came a crash and a

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Look out!" cried Betty. "His knife!" Hélène snatched a pistol from her blouse, but he was too quick for her.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ripple of shots. A chorus of yells pierced thinly the howling of the gale.

Nikka, hearing Hélène's pistol, had accepted it as the signal for his attack.

"Take care of Betty, Professor!" Hugh called to King. "See if you can help this poor girl. Come on, Jack—Watty!"

THE big room was a maze of shadows. Stable-lanterns, flickering in the drafts, hung from hooks in walls and pillars. Toutou stayed his flight by the door to the courtyard, one ear inclined to the bedlam of shots and outcries that threaded the roar of the storm. As we burst in he raised a pistol and sprayed us with steel as rapidly as he could pull the trigger. But he had the knife-fighter's inability to shoot straight. None of us was hit.

Several men and women stared at us. Hilmi Bey peered from behind a pillar next the courtyard door. He had plainly taken cover at the crack of Hélène's pistol. Monty Hilyer and Serge Vassilivich stood some distance to the right of us, paralyzed with astonishment. Maude Hilyer and Sandra Vassilievna had risen from seats in the apselike recess at the other end. Apparently they had supposed Toutou was engaged only with Hélène.

He screamed at them, insensate in his fury, and flung his empty pistol at us.

"Fools!" he shrieked. "We are betrayed!"

The door to the courtyard was jerked open, and he spun on his heel and dodged behind a pillar. Tokalji reeled in.

"Strange Tzigane folk have burst the street door!" he bellowed.

He gaped at sight of us.

"Quick!" Hugh shouted. "Scatter—before they shoot!"

Watkins and I jumped right and left. Hugh sought the shelter of a pillar.

"Shoot!" yelled Toutou. "Shoot! Fools! Swine! Dogs!"

And he babbled on, darting, catlike, from pillar to pillar toward Watty. Hilyer and Serge simultaneously came to life and made for us, guns spurting, throwing pieces of furniture to confuse us. The fight developed so rapidly that it was impossible to keep track of everything, but I found myself involved in a pistol-duel with Serge. Hugh and Watkins were blazing away at Hilmi. Hilyer, Tokalji and Toutou were weaving through the smoke, seeking an opportunity to close with one of us. I paid no attention to the women until a bullet spatted on a pillar by my ear. I knew it could not have come from the front, and, startled, I turned to look to the left in time to see Sandra aiming deliberately at me. I dodged, and thereby opened myself to her brother's attack.

He was an excellent marksman, and I realized there could be only one result for me if I continued exposed in flank. So I tore a lantern from its hook and flung it on the floor. The burning oil vomited forth a cloud of thick black smoke, and under cover of this I changed my position, gaining the protection of another pillar. Here I was safe from Sandra, but her brother knew where I was, and our duel continued. It was no steady stream of bullets but a pot-shot whenever one of us thought he saw an opportunity. All round us others were doing the same thing, and the vaulted roof rang to the reports, while the acrid fumes of the powder and the smoke from broken lamps stung the eyes. And outside the thunder was pealing and the lightning splitting the heavens, and Nikka's men and Tokalji's Gipsies were trying their feeble best to rival nature's forces.

Suddenly I sensed that our opponents were bracing for a combined effort. There was a rapid-fire exchange of exclamations in the thieves' French-and-Tzigane dialect they used for confidential communication. I heard an empty cartridge-clip jingle on the floor. But in the shifting light and smoke it was impossible now to tell real men from the shadows. I stuck my head round a pillar, crouched and slipped aside. Then the rush came.

"Go!" called Hilyer's voice.

The shadows were pricked with pistol-flashes. Serge Vassilivich leaped for the pillar behind which I had stood, his gun blazing, knife in hand. He did not see me on my knees, four feet to the right, and I put my first bullet in his left knee. He stopped as if a giant's hand had been shoved against his breast, tottered and fell backward. As he fell, one of the burning oil pools ignited a bundle of blankets, and the rising flames sketched us both clearly against the darkness that shrouded the far end of the room.

There was a scream. I recognized Sandra's voice, but I could not see her.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Instead, I saw Hilmi Bey sneaking on Watkins, who was holding back Toutou. I drove the Levantine away with my first shot. Then the hammer clicked, and I knew the magazine was empty. I dropped to my knee again, thinking I was concealed by a patch of shadow, and fumbled for a fresh clip. But the treacherous light flared upward, the shadow disappeared and I was left defenseless. I saw a raging figure, hair flying, pistol raised, running at me. I saw the pistol flash, felt a numbing blow on my left shoulder and tumbled in a heap.

For a second my eyes misted, the room danced before me. Then I heard a chatter in Russian, and Watkins, mildly disapproving.

"None of that 'ere, miss, *if* you please, now! I don't want to 'urt you, but——"

I looked up. Sandra, her face contorted with rage, her empty pistol shaking in her hand, was backing away before Watty's menacing crowbar.

A woman screamed again, horribly, so that it rasped your heartstrings. It was Maude Hilyer. She stood, with hands clutching her cheeks, her gaze fixed on the center of the room where Monty staggered against a pillar, bravely trying for the last time to raise the smoking muzzle of his automatic.

HUGH, relieved of the Englishman's attack, was taking pot-shots at Toutou and Hilmi. I saw Tokalji slip through the door into the rain, and as Vernon King ran up the stairs from the atrium, Hilmi followed the Tzigane and Toutou jumped through a window, squalling like the big cat he was. Behind me, Watkins was scientifically roping Sandra hand and foot, regardless of the curses she spat in three languages. Vassilivich had fainted from the pain of his wound. Maude Hilyer sat on the dirty floor, under the single wabbling lantern that remained intact, and cradled the head of her dying husband. We had swept the House of the Married.

Or had we? As I tried unsuccessfully with one hand to reload my pistol, I felt a pressure on my back. I turned and very nearly impaled myself on a long knife-blade. A tense, willowy figure, barefooted and tumble-haired, stood over me.

"You are Jakka," said Kara in the Tzigane dialect—I could understand simple phrases after my experience with Wasso Mikali's tribespeople. "Where is Nikka?"

Dumfounded, I pointed to the courtyard. She glided toward the door, but Hugh intervened.

"Not so fast," he said. "Whose friend are you?"

She did not understand him and raised her knife.

"I'll shoot you—if you *are* a girl," warned Hugh. "Any one who resists——"

"She's all right, Hugh!" I called. "She's trying to find Nikka. Let her go."

But she did not wait for him to stand aside. With a single leap she put one of the pillars between him and herself and vaulted from the window Toutou had escaped through.

"Nothing slow about that girl," said Hugh.

A pistol cracked in the doorway, and the bullet sang by his ear.

"They're still after us," he commented, dropping beside me. "Have to load my gun."

"Then load mine, too," I said. "My left shoulder's hit—whole arm is no use."

He laid down his automatic.

"We'll carry you inside with Betty. I see Watty has made a prisoner, and Vassilivich had better be watched. You can——"

"I will not," I returned. "We'll need every man before we finish to-night. Hear that!"

The courtyard had become an inferno—yells, screams, howls, shots, the beat of the rain and the din of the storm.

"Tie my arm to my side and I'll be O. K." I urged.

Betty crawled between us.

"Did I hear you call me?" she asked.

"My word!" grunted Hugh. "Get back, Bet! This is——"

"Touch and go," she supplemented his sentence. "I have Hélène's gun—she's gone, poor thing! You boys had better help Nikka. I can guard this place."

A whistle shrilled in the courtyard.

"Hugh!" It was Nikka's voice. "Jack!"

There was a racket of shots.

"He must be badly outnumbered," muttered Hugh. "No time to lose. Here, Jack; where's your handkerchief? Right-o! Thanks, Bet! Not too tight. Can you stand that?"

"Yes. Load my gun, somebody."

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Betty took it. King, ensconced behind an adjacent pillar, fired at the door.

"They seem to be waiting for us out there," he observed.

"Yes," said Hugh. "Betty, you lie here in the shadows. Don't let anybody approach you, no matter what they say. Keep an eye on Mrs. Hilyer and the Russian girl—and her brother. See him over there? He's done in, for the time being. But if he comes to, maybe you'd better tie him up."

"Don't worry about me," answered Betty valiantly. "I can take care of myself. Do hurry!"

" 'Ere, your ludship," came a whisper from Watkins. "This way, gentlemen."

He was at the far end of the room, and while we watched he put his hat on the end of his crowbar, from which he refused to be parted, and stuck it above the sill of a window.

"I've done this twice now, your ludship," he added, "and nothing's 'appened. They ain't watching 'ere."

A LITTLE investigation proved that he was right, and we crawled out into the rain and huddled against the house wall, attempting to disentangle the situation. The water was descending in slanting, blinding sheets. Pistols cracked and men gasped or shouted, but we could not tell whether they were friends or foes. As we waited, two men dashed by, one in pursuit of the other. It was impossible for us to intervene. Then, with a preliminary crash of thunder, the lightning zigzagged across the sky, and for the winking of an eye the courtyard was bright as day.

I had an impression of bodies scattered here and there, and little clusters of men that struggled and ran. Over in the corner of the courtyard wall by the bachelor's house men swirled in a tumultuous mass. The darkness closed down once more.

"Coming, Nikka!" shouted Hugh. And to us: "The big fight is the key to everything. We must break it up. They've got Nikka pinned in."

Tokalji's gang faced round as we attacked their rear; but we went clean through them and almost drove onto the knives of Nikka's party.

"After them!" panted Hugh. "We've got 'em breaking!"

Nikka called to his men in their own tongue, and they lined up with us in a thin line across the courtyard from wall to wall. Behind Nikka I had a brief glimpse of a figure as elusive as the rain. I lifted my automatic, but something warned me it was Kara.

There was a crackle of pistol-fire in front of us, and a knot of figures swayed into view, distorted, indistinct. The deluge seemed to act as a freak lens to play tricks with normal vision, and possibly that was why comparatively few were shot. Twice I had men fair over the barrel of my pistol, and both times I missed—and I am rather better than a good shot.

Toutou and Hilmi Bey went for Nikka. He was bleeding from a cut in the arm, and all his men were engaged. Hugh, with King and Watty, was developing an encircling movement on the opposite end of the line. I started to go to Nikka's aid, but a man sprang at me from nowhere, and I was obliged to dodge him until I had a chance to shoot. I did not miss that time. When I looked again, Nikka and Toutou were circling each other, and Hilmi was at grips with Kara.

At first I thought the Levantine was scheming to throw the girl, but as I drew near I perceived that he had clinched with her, in mortal terror of her knife. She held his own powerless by her grasp of his wrist. A mocking light gleamed in her eyes as she shook back her loose hair and jeered at him in the Tzigane dialect. With one pudgy hand he strove to ward off her blade, but he could not control her lithe muscles. She tore her wrist free; the steel drove home through his sodden frock-coat, and he collapsed with a squeal.

Kara pulled out her knife as casually as though it had been a familiar occurrence and turned to watch Nikka's fight with Toutou. Nikka, from the corner of his eye, saw us plainly waiting a chance to help him, and he leaped clear of the circle of his enemy's knife long enough to snap:

"Let be! I finish this alone!"

I couldn't have helped him in any case, for as redoubtable a person as Tokalji himself attacked me at that moment. Kara did not even notice my danger. She also ignored the man she called "father." Her whole attention was concentrated upon Nikka. I fired once at the Gipsy chief,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

and missed. That was the last cartridge in the magazine, and I attempted to lose him in the rain. But he refused to be lost, and I was making up my mind to taking his knife in my wounded arm and battering his head with my pistol-butt when Watkins loomed in the mist and brought down his trusty crowbar on Tokalji's knife-wrist. The Gipsy yelped like a dog, and the knife clattered on the ground. Watty produced some rope from a pocket and deftly twisted the man's arms behind him. Tokalji yelped again.

"Easy, Watty," I said. "The fellow's wrist is broken."

"I'm tying 'im above the helbows, Mr. Jack, sir," answered Watty. "But if it did 'urt 'im a bit, I wouldn't worry, sir. I 'ave an hidea, sir, 'e was one of the scoundrels that bashed me 'ead."

MY ONE thought was of Nikka, and I sought him over the rain-battered area of the court. The fighting had drifted away toward the sea-wall. There seemed to be nobody near me. But I listened hard, and in a lull of the storm my ears detected the click of blades. I stumbled toward it and nearly fell on top of Kara, crouching as I had left her, eyes glued on the two men who circled tirelessly, steel-tipped arms crooked before them.

Toutou had a huge advantage in reach, but Nikka had the benefit of agility—a wrist of iron, the result of years of bowing; a hawk's eye, and all the tricks with the blade that the people of his race have acquired in centuries of bloody strife. Four times, while I watched, Toutou endeavored to force down Nikka's knife by the sheer strength of his gorilla-arm, and each time Nikka disengaged and refused to give the opportunity his adversary needed. Twice Nikka tried a certain trick—a combination of lightning thrusts and clever foot-work. But the Frenchman parried it each time and retaliated so quickly as to drive Nikka out of reach.

Neither of them said anything. Toutou spat and whined in his throat, cat-fashion. Nikka panted from the exertion. Both of them dripped with sweat, notwithstanding the rain. By all principles of right behavior, I should have ignored Nikka's command to let him fight it out alone and rushed in at the first opening to kill a monster, who did not deserve and had no appreciation of knightly treatment. But I could not. I was chained by some emotion I could not fathom.

And yet I was absorbed in Nikka's success. My heart leaped in my throat when I saw that he was trying for the third time the trick which had twice failed. His knife went up in the same way; he shifted posture as he had in his other tries, and Toutou mechanically side-stepped as experience had told him was safe and aimed a stab which should have cut Nikka's throat. But Nikka was not there. He had varied the trick. Stooping, his knife had fallen, then sliced upward—and Toutou swayed, a look of bland surprise on his face.

"Pt-sss-ss-tss-sst!" he hissed, and fell forward, dead.

Kara hurled herself into Nikka's arms.

"You are the greatest knife-fighter of the Tziganes!" she cried triumphantly. "You are a king! You are my man! See—while you conquered your enemy, I, too, stabbed the rat who tried to put his knife in your back."

And she led Nikka to the body of Hilmi, which, I regret to say, she kicked with her brown toes. Nikka absent-mindedly leaned over to wipe his knife on the Levantine's coat tails, but Kara intervened.

"No, no!" she exclaimed. "Here is my hair! Wipe it on my hair, beloved of my heart! Let me suck it clean with my lips. So we shall have strong sons."

Nikka looked sufficiently annoyed to show that he had some instincts of civilization remaining.

"Peace!" he ordered royally. "Be quiet!"

She cowered before him, and he recognized me.

"Oh, hello, Jack! Where's Hugh?"

Hugh loomed through the rain as he spoke.

"That you, Nikka? We think we've got Tokalji's people rounded up, but we need you to talk to them. Has Toutou——"

"He's there."

Nikka pointed his knife at the heap of drab garments.

"Good for you!" exclaimed Hugh. "I'm glad he didn't get off. When you think of Uncle James and—that girl we saw—and I suppose others. What a beast!"

We splashed after him, Kara following Nikka like a dog. Wasso Mikali, his four

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

surviving young men, King and Watkins were guarding twelve shivering Gipsies in the lee of the bachelors' quarters. In reply to questions, Tokalji told Nikka—and Kara, shamelessly throwing in her lot with us, corroborated him—that there had been seventeen of their band on the premises. A search of the courtyard disclosed five of them dead, together with two of Wasso Mikali's men. We bound the arms of the prisoners, several of whom were suffering from bullet-wounds or stabs, and marched them over to the House of the Married.

The one lantern was still flickering when we entered, and Betty rose to greet us.

"Thank God!" she said soberly as her eyes envisaged us all. "What did you do with Mrs. Hilyer?"

"Isn't she here?" asked Hugh.

"No. I don't know just when she left."

Nikka and I sped back into the courtyard. We picked our way over the occasional bodies to the street door. It was ajar.

"I locked it myself!" cried Nikka. "Old Wasso picked it without damaging the spring. I took time when we entered to fasten it again."

I was feeling very weak. My shoulder throbbed. But I clutched the gate-post and peered into the street. Nobody was in sight.

"She escaped," said Nikka. "Too bad! We might have— What's the matter, Jack?"

He caught me as my knees bent under me. I felt the rain on my eyelids, and then everything was blotted out.

WHEN I opened my eyes, Watkins was bending over me.

"Ah, there, Mr. Jack!" he said; "'Ave a drink of this. Thank you, sir." And, as I struggled to a sitting position: "No need of 'aste, sir. All's well. And you 'ad a bit of a knock, if I may say so, sir."

"It seems as though you and I were the Jonahs, Watty," I answered. "This is the third time I've passed out cold."

"Quite right, sir. The same thought was in my own 'ead. If Mrs. Prouty and 'Awkins—the butler, sir—and the others in the servants' 'all could 'ave seen me last night, they would 'ave been startled, sir. I do assure you they would. There was that Russian young lady, now. I give you my word, sir, she cursed like a maniac, and 'er brother was no better when 'e came from 'is faint. A fair rowdy lot of people we 'ad on our 'ands—including the young person in whom Mr. Nikka happears to be interested, as the saying goes, sir."

"You said 'last night,' I believe," I interrupted.

"Yes, sir. It's close to noon, Mr. Jack. But, Lord bless you, sir, there's been no rest. We 'ad a largish hundertaker's job, let alone tidying up and minding the prisoners."

"What have we done with the bodies?"

"In the garden, sir. The prisoners did the work—except the Russian persons, sir. 'E couldn't, account of 'is leg, and she, being a lady, so to speak, was hexcused."

"Well, I'm going to get up," I announced. "My shoulder feels better."

"If you wish, sir. Miss Betty thought you would be fit after a nap. She and Mr. Nikka's uncle—the tall old gentleman who looks like Pantaloon in the Drury Lane pantos—they looked you over. They said your shoulder-bone was bruised and the muscle torn, sir; but they've wrapped you up to the king's taste— Oh, 'ere's Mister Nikka!"

Nikka strolled in from the courtyard—I was lying in the apse at the end of the large chamber on the ground floor of the House of the Married—with Kara trailing him.

"Hello, Jack!" he greeted me. "Tough luck you had to stop a bullet! We're all more or less cut up, but you had the worst of it, although my uncle, who is a practical surgeon in a crude way, claims the bullet missed the bone."

"So Watkins told me. Any news? The police——"

"No, the storm covered the shooting. Hugh has been to Pera with Betty in the *Curlew* this morning, and they heard no comments. One of the Wasso Mikali's men stopped in at the corner coffee-shop, and made sure there was no local gossip. The only danger, I think, is from Mrs. Hilyer. We've got to risk that."

"Aren't you all worn out?"

"No. Too much excitement, I expect. We're just going to eat. Then Betty insists on going after the treasure."

Kara sidled up to him, with a venomous glance at me, and ejaculated a remark *sotto voce*. Nikka laughed, and pushed her behind him. She heeded him like a dog

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

that is contented with a rebuke so long as notice is taken by its master.

"She said," Nikka translated, "that I ought not to talk with you any longer. She wants me to pay attention to her."

"Humph," I growled, returning Kara's look with interest. "Help me up; will you? Thanks! What are you going to do with her?"

"Tame her, I expect," he answered cheerfully. "I've begun by taking her knife away from her. She wanted to stick Betty because I talked more than five minutes to Bet about you."

"A sweet job! She'll end by sticking you."

"Perhaps," agreed Nikka equably. "Come and get some breakfast. A cup of coffee will help you to take a more charitable view of a wild little Gipsy girl."

Hugh, Betty and Vernon King welcomed us as we entered the atrium, where a low table of packing-boxes had been rigged. Wasso Mikali and his men were either guarding the prisoners or keeping watch on the street entrance. Kara scowled at us, but squatted determinedly behind Nikka. Watkins proceeded to serve, and I was amused to note that Kara, much against her will, was secretly awed by the matter-of-fact pomp with which Watty was able to invest a meal under such conditions.

We talked very little. The one idea in the mind of each of us was to get at the red stone, which we could see from where we sat, and we choked down our food as rapidly as possible. I forgot completely my injured shoulder. Watkins actually hurried himself in passing the eggs. Betty and Hugh crumbled a few bits of toast and strangled over their coffee. Vernon King, alone, ate placidly, with the zest of a man who feels he has done a good job well. At last Betty could stand it no longer, and she sprang up, with an imitation of Kara's scowl so faithful that everybody except Kara laughed.

"Daddy, you've had time for two breakfasts," she decreed. "That's enough. Besides, I won't have you getting fat in your old age. Come, everybody! We've got our chance—our chance that we began to think was gone west. The Treasure of the Bucoleon is at our feet—under our feet, I mean. Up with the red stone!"

"Up she goes!" assented Hugh.

Crowbars, chisels, mallets, picks and shovels appeared, and Hugh paced the distance from the Fountain of the Lion. His calculations indicated the stone that I had roughly estimated on our first visit to the garden. We all watched him with madly beating hearts. It was really true! We were going to lay bare the secret, to grasp the prize that the Emperor Andronicus had concealed seven centuries before.

The thought exhilarated us, and when Hugh stepped aside and seized a chisel and mallet, we all set to with superhuman energy. I was unable to do much, but I experienced a sharp pleasure in the mere act of holding with my one hand the head of a chisel upon which one of the others rained blows with a mallet.

WORKING at such a pace, and with so many willing hands, it was only a matter of a few minutes before the stone was detached from its neighbors and Nikka thrust the tip of a crowbar under its edge. Followed then a struggle of some duration, but in the end it sagged up and was overturned. Below it was a second stone of equal dimensions, granite, unmortared, although the dust of ages had sifted into the cracks round it. This yielded to our efforts much sooner than had the capstone, and Hugh, kneeling amid the débris, peered down into a yawning hole in the pavement.

"Careful!" warned King. "A compartment which has been sealed for centuries will be full of carbonic-acid gas."

Hugh sniffed.

"It's as damp as—as—that beastly drain," he said. "But it smells reasonably sweet."

We poked our torches into the hole. All they showed was a steep flight of stairs descending straight into blackness.

"Most extraordinary!" mumbled Vernon King. "Byzantine masonry, beyond a doubt. Observe the squaring of the blocks and the composition of the mortar. This is no such slovenly work as Turkish masons do now."

"If it's safe, what are we waiting for?" I barked. My nerves were on edge.

"Oh, take your time," said Hugh impatiently, and he lowered himself, feet first.

The others followed him, one by one, and I brought up the rear, ashamed of myself for the temper I had exhibited. The pitch

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

of the stairs was so sharp that we had to bend only a little in passing under the rim of the opening. They were barely wide enough for one man, and I counted thirty of them before they terminated in a passage that led off at right angles, with an appreciable downward slope.

"Hold up!" Hugh called back to us a moment later. "Here's an opening into another passage. There's a step down. Why, this is the drain again!"

We joined him, incredulous, only to be convinced at once that he was right. The passage debouched on the sewer some distance inland from the grating of the dungeon.

"My God!" groaned Hugh. "And we've gone through everything for this! Was there ever such a sell!"

"There may be some explanation," said Nikka.

"Perhaps we overlooked something," I volunteered.

"There *is* an explanation," cried Betty. "We *have* overlooked something. I know it. There must be!"

"It's no go," answered Hugh despondently. "I've brought you on a wild-goose chase."

We all looked rather white and wan in the cold light of the electric torches.

"It's not your fault, old man," I said, after a moment's silence, trying dismally to be cheerful. "The lead looked good. We followed it because we hoped it would make you rich. We failed, and that's that."

Betty stared wildly from one to the other of us.

"You all make me tired!" she exclaimed. "Why should we give up hope? How long have we looked? What— Oh, let me out! I must think!"

She brushed by me into the fake passage, and the echo of her footfalls reached us faintly.

"WE MIGHT as well follow her," said Hugh. "I'm awfully sorry, you chaps. You risked your lives for this rotten show. My poor deluded uncle! I expect most of these buried-treasure stories are bunk, anyway. It's—it's—oh, well, I suppose its really funny!"

We climbed wearily up the thirty steps to the garden level. As I reached the surface the first object my eyes encountered was Betty, sitting on the red stone and poring over a sheet of paper.

"Hello!" she called, looking up with all her accustomed vivacity. "Do you recognize this paper, Hugh?"

She fluttered it at him.

"Looks like my handwriting," he admitted.

"It's the copy of the instructions you sent me, which I remailed to myself *Poste Restante*. I remembered it this morning, when we were in Pera, and called for it at the post-office. I thought we might need it."

"What good can it do?" asked Hugh.

"There's an important point in it which nobody has appreciated up to this time. It becomes doubly important in view of what we have just seen."

"The elided portion!" exclaimed Nikka.

"Exactly! Look!"

And she spread the paper before us. Hugh had faithfully copied his uncle's translation of the old Latin, setting down also the several rows of dots by which Lord Chesby had indicated the words which had been smudged out by moisture and handling at some past time. They appeared, you will recall, at the conclusion of the explicit directions:

> Underfoot is a red stone an ell square. Raise the——

And then nothing distinguishable until the concluding line of farewell.

"Well?" demanded Betty triumphantly, as we all studied the cryptic dots.

Hugh shook his head.

"Betty, you were a brick to remember it," he said; "but, honestly, what use is it? Whatever words are missing are unimportant. They must have been, or somebody would have rewritten them."

"That does not necessarily follow," spoke up Vernon King. "Old documents, especially those inscribed on parchment, are tricky records. It frequently happens that some isolated portion will be spoiled while the other parts of the same sheet may retain their integrity. Moreover, we should not lose sight of the possibility that the person who last concealed the parchment—the Lady Jane Chesby of whom you have spoken—seems not to have been inclined to attach much importance to it. She would have been the last one

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

to attempt to make good its deficiencies."

"But where could the treasure be that we have not looked?" demanded Hugh. "The directions are explicit. We followed them faithfully. So far as they exist, we have verified their accuracy. But we have uncovered no place which could have served as a treasure-chamber."

"Yes, Hugh; the directions are explicit," retorted Betty. "And, as you say, so far as we have them, they have proved correct. They left us in the passage under the red stone which ends at the drain. And why was that passage built? Why, to get into the drain!"

"And the treasure was in the drain?" protested Hugh. "That's absurd, Bet!"

"It would have been washed away long ago," I scoffed. "That place is full of water at very high tides."

"I didn't say it was heaped on the floor and left there," returned Betty.

"Where would it be?" asked Nikka.

"That's what we have to find out."

"What about the grating in the floor of the dungeon?" I cut in. "If they wanted to get into the drain——"

"But no man who had hidden a treasure in the drain would have relied on a drainage-grating in a dungeon for means of access to it," answered Betty.

"That dungeon was a place for getting rid of special prisoners," said King. "When the drain was actively in use, the water must often have backed up into the dungeon. I agree with Elizabeth that an emperor hiding a vast treasure would not have utilized the grating for access to it."

Nikka closed the argument.

"I am on Betty's side in this," he said. "At the least, she has given us something definite to work on. Now, if you will take my advice, Hugh, you and Professor King, with Betty and Jack to help you, will be the treasure-hunting squad. I had best remain here to act as expeditionary liaison officer with Wasso Mikali and his people at need. And if you don't mind, I'll keep Watkins as galloper."

Every one agreed to this plan, and the four of us immediately descended into the passage again, where King began a careful study of the stonework, in which I assisted him, with a view to ascertaining beyond any doubt whether there was any sealed opening in its walls. Both of us considered this the logical first step, but Hugh and Betty tired of so unexciting a task and left us to explore the upper end of the drain.

WE HAD been at this for rather more than an hour, without the faintest hint of success, when we were interrupted by a hail from Hugh.

"Professor! Jack! Come here!"

"Oh, dad," called Betty, "here's a funny inscription on the wall!"

We dropped into the water and waded inland for some twenty-odd paces to where they were standing, with their torches bearing on a patch of marble let into the rough face of the right-hand wall. Hugh was working with his knife-point, scraping away the moss and fungi that partially obscured the letters.

"I saw it by accident," bubbled Betty. "We went up a long way to where the roof gets much lower, and we heard water rushing ahead of us, so Hugh said we ought to turn back. My light just happened to catch on this piece of stone here as we passed it. There was one row of letters quite clear, but the others were all overgrown with this slimy stuff. What does it say, dad?"

"It's Greek, right enough," added Hugh, still scraping industriously. "I can make out a word here and there, but it doesn't seem to be the same language I boned at school. Just a moment, sir, and I'll have the whole inscription cleared."

I peered over their shoulders at the deeply carved lines of angular characters. The stone was about three or four feet square, and below it was another similar one. Above the lettering was an elaborately scrolled cross. From it my eyes sought my uncle's face, and were held at once by the astonishment I saw mirrored there.

"Most amazing!" he muttered to himself.

"What is it, dad?" clamored Betty.

"But it can't be," he said, shaking his head. "Quite extraordinary! Dear me, I never saw this formula before."

"For Pat's sake, tell us!" I implored.

"It says nothing about the treasure, my dear boys," he answered sadly. "My surprise was called forth by the unusual form of expression. These inscriptions always follow a certain set phraseology, but this one is strikingly different."

"By gum!" groaned Betty inelegantly. "Isn't this the limit?"

Everybody's Magazine, September, 1923

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Read it, anyway," I urged.

"It says," began King, "and, mind you, I am translating roughly, 'In the year after Christ 1185 and of the Indiction 2, Andronicus, the Scepter-Wielder, Christ-loving emperor of the Romans, built this drain new from the tide-level—' " He broke off.

"So far it is no different from thousands of other inscriptions we might find on the city walls, aqueducts, cisterns, churches or other public works. But now comes the part I cannot understand: 'If there were tongues, many might praise him.' "

" 'If there were tongues many might praise him,' " repeated Betty. "And it was the Emperor Andronicus—the one the instructions speak about?"

"Manifestly, my dear. The date certifies to that."

"Then there must be something in it," she insisted. " 'If there were tongues, many might praise him.' Don't you see what it means? There were no tongues to praise him. This work was not known at the time. Why? And why was he able to keep it a secret?"

"He may have murdered all the workmen," replied her father slowly. "He was a singularly bloody tyrant."

"Exactly!" triumphed Betty. "And why would he have murdered them? In order to keep this work a secret. You see, he built the drain new from the tide-level—probably to this point. That means there was a drain, but it needed repair, and he seized the opportunity to hide his treasure. Hugh, where are those tools? I'm going to get this stone out of the wall."

AFTER two hours Hugh and Vernon King were able to pry the slab loose, and it fell out with a mighty splash. Hugh thrust in the end of his crowbar, and it struck brickwork. Our torches showed this to be very flimsy, and when it was pounded it rang hollow. We three, having two arms apiece, went at it with a will, and I was sent back for reenforcements.

Nikka refused to come himself, but he sent Watty, and the valet helped in the final act of demolition. By the end of the afternoon we had smashed through an embrasure nearly three feet high and four feet long, and Hugh nominated Betty for the honor of leading the way into the dim chamber which seemed to open from a short passage abutting on the hole. The rest of us crawled in afterward. My uncle and Watkins boosted me up, for my bad shoulder hindered me.

The passage was seven feet high and four feet wide. It led straight back between brick walls into a large chamber, the roof of which was upheld by brick piers. The place was musty, fetid even, and very damp, but as our torches struggled through the darkness the rays were captured and juggled by glinting, shiny heaps that were stacked against the piers and walls. Betty started forward involuntarily.

"It's gold!" she cried.

We flashed our torches right and left. It was true! Great golden piles sloped away from us. The fragments of the bags that once had held this wealth projected from the multitude of coins. At the end of the chamber the piles mounted to the roof. There were stray rivulets of gold that trickled almost to the mouth of the passage. To the left stood several tiers of ancient chests. The first yielded at once to the point of Hugh's knife. The rotten wood cut like cardboard. When he flung the lid back it fell apart, but we hardly noticed it for the dazzling glamour of the gems that seemed almost to fight to escape from their centuries-long imprisonment.

Jewels and jewelry and massive plate were heaped in indiscriminate confusion, huge salvers, cups, chalices, amphoræ, bracelets, armlets, brooches, necklaces, rings beyond number—and running in and out of the set stones, the endless profusion of unmounted gems, diamonds, amethysts, rubies, opals, pearls, sapphires, topazes, garnets, turquoises, emeralds and others I could not name.

The profusion of precious things was almost unbelievable. And this was but one of a score of chests.

King stooped and scooped up a handful of gold pieces from the floor, broad, finely minted, bearing the double-headed eagle of Byzantium and the busts and figures of dead-and-gone emperors.

"Was there ever such a find?" he muttered. "What a chance for the numismatists! See! Here is a byzant of Artavasdos the Usurper. I never saw one before. It was not known that he had coined money. And here is the likeness of Arcadius, first of the Eastern emperors."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Betty threw her arms round Hugh, as shameless, for the moment, as Kara.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" she murmured. "It's as much as you thought it would be; isn't it?"

Hugh was dazed.

"As much? By Jove, sweetheart, I—I never dreamed of anything like this! I—really, you know, I didn't honestly believe in it before. I used to pretend to make myself carry on. I told myself it was up to me to see the thing through on Uncle James' account. But this! I say, Professor, how much do you suppose there is here?"

Vernon King swept his torch in an arc round the chamber.

"I am no fiscal expert, my dear boy. It would take a committee of jewelers to assess those chests alone. As for the gold, I have seen the Treasury vaults in Washington, and gold mounts up fast when you run into the thousands of pounds avoirdupois. Just as a wild guess, I might hazard a minimum of a hundred million dollars."

"But it can't be!" I protested, the sweat beading my forehead at the thought. "Why, it's ridiculous! They didn't have wealth on such a scale in those days."

"Not at all, Jack," returned my uncle, his scholar's pride roused. "You must remember that you are viewing here the hoard accumulated by a ruler of the Roman empire, one of the last of its rulers before the definite initiation of its final collapse. It was then still by far the richest country of which we have any record. According to Benjamin of Tudela, the Jewish traveler of the twelfth century, the revenue received by the emperor from the city of Constantinople by itself amounted to seven million, three hundred thousand nomismata, or in the neighborhood of twenty million dollars.

"Benjamin and other later authorities, assert the revenue derived from the remainder of the empire to have represented five times this sum. At the most moderate computation, the total revenue must have exceeded one hundred and twenty million dollars. It was probably very much more. In addition, the wealth of the individual citizens and nobles was enormous. The Emperor Andronicus, with whose efforts we have to deal here, had two years to milk the country's wealth. During those two years he not only absorbed the taxes but confiscated the wealth of more nobles than any ruler prior to that period. I should not be greatly surprised if the contents of this chamber were discovered to exceed a hundred and twenty-five millions——"

"If you aren't very lucky, Hugh, you are going to lose all this stuff just because you were lucky enough to find it," said Nikka's voice behind us.

We turned to confront him. Kara's dark, passionate face was at his shoulder. Her eyes drank in the picture, and she stood on her tiptoes to whisper in Nikka's ear.

"No, thank you, my dear," he answered dryly. "She suggests that I give her my knife, and that between us we clean up you people. Oddly enough, she is not alone in possessing that idea. Who do you suppose is up-stairs?"

"Mrs. Hilyer," I exclaimed.

"Right! But she's not alone. She came back with Mahkouf Pasha. I've got them both safe under lock and key, with Wasso Mikali's knife at their throats. Still——"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Out of the frying-pan into the fire, your ludship," remarked Watkins glumly. "Sure I was this was too good to last."

RELUCTANTLY, and with many a backward look, we retired from that glimmering vault of wealth and climbed to the atrium. We were all soaked to the waist and suddenly conscious of the fatigue of the last two crowded days. Personally, I felt that I had reached the limit. I didn't care what happened. I thought that we were in a hopeless fix. Vernon King was equally morose. Betty was ready to weep. Nikka was sardonically amused at our ill luck. Kara was indifferent, so long as Nikka refused to embark upon a scheme of wholesale murder in order to impound the treasure for themselves alone. Watty was tiredly hopeless. Only Hugh squared his jaw and said nothing.

"I'll have the precious pair fetched in if you like," volunteered Nikka, as we sat about the room. "But I don't see the use. I've talked to them, and I can assure you they aren't in a mood to be agreeable. Mrs. Hilyer is consumed with revenge. She isn't thinking of anything else. She just wants to get back at us. Mahkouf is politely threatening. He figures that he has us on the hip because of the killings last night—murder of his Imperial Majesty's

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

subjects and all that. He talked about international complications and lawlessness."

"Could we, perhaps, detain them sufficiently long to permit us to get away?" inquired my uncle.

"With the treasure? Hardly! I say; do you realize the sheer physical job in removing that stuff? Why, there must be tons of it! It would have to be boxed and crated. And where would you take it to? How would you take it anywhere? To arrange for its removal would require—oh, I'd hate to say how long. In the mean time we might hold Mrs. Hilyer without causing any comment, but Mahkouf is a well-known person. He isn't called 'the Grand Vizier's Jackal' for nothing."

Wasso Mikali appeared in the doorway at the foot of the stairs that led up to the large chamber on the courtyard level. His face was grim, and the tone in which he addressed Nikka so savage as to attract the attention of all of us. Kara eyed him with approval and ventured a confirmatory nod.

"He says," Nikka translated, "that the only thing for us to do is to kill Tokalji and the rest of the prisoners, stow their bodies in the drain that I have told him about, and then deny to Mahkouf that there ever was a fight or that there is any treasure here. He insists it was a great mistake for us to take any prisoners, but that we can yet remedy it in time."

"He's dead wrong," said Hugh abruptly. "I think I can use Tokalji to work out of this mess."

"How?" asked Nikka.

"By making it worth his while. He'd do anything for money; wouldn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, we have the money in limitless quantities. I want to say a word to you lads and Professor King that has been on my chest ever since I saw that treasure-vault. I never thought of this before, because I didn't take the story any too seriously, as I've already said. But now it's beyond cavil. My point is this: There's too much wealth down there for any one man. Professor King says there may be a hundred and twenty-five million dollars. Nobody needs that much just to lead his own life in affluence. I'm going to divide it equally between you, Nikka, Jack, Professor King, Watty and myself, subject to whatever disbursements Nikka thinks Wasso Mikali should have and a price necessary to attach Tokalji's allegiance to us."

"Your idea of purchasing Tokalji's aid, supposing he can aid us, is a good one," said my uncle. "But I have more money now than I can use. I must absolutely refuse your offer, Hugh."

"Me, too, your ludship," spoke up Watkins. "What would I do with millions of pounds? All the other servants would be jealous of me, and the newspaper gentlemen would be 'aving their fun with me every day, most like. No, no, sir! I'm an old man, and with all due respect I'm sure I'd much rather stay on with you at Chesby, your ludship, and valet you properly. It ain't so easy to find a good valet nowadays, sir. Really, sir, I'd rather not."

"Well," said Hugh, "we won't fight about that, Watty. If you stay with me, you—Why, hang it all, you're one of the best friends I've got! You must stay. But I'm going to insist on splitting with Jack and Nikka. Then Jack can build houses to suit himself; and Nikka can play his fiddle to poor boys and girls."

"I knew you'd make an offer like that, Hugh," said Nikka simply. "It's like you. And don't you worry about Wasso Mikali. I'll take care of him and his tribe with my share. It wouldn't do them any good to make them grossly rich. They'd leave their old ways of life, contract tuberculosis or dissipate themselves to death. Let them be. They live an idyllic life—a life good enough for me, anyway. But I'm not going to protest against the corruption of Tokalji if you believe you can make anything out of it. What is your idea?"

"Have him in," answered Hugh. "I'll show you."

WASSO MIKALI brought in the brigand chief, his broken arm in a sling, a sour glint of hatred in his eye.

"Now," said Hugh, "ask him, Nikka, if he'd like to be so rich he wouldn't need to steal again except to indulge his sporting-tastes?"

Tokalji evidently considered he was being spoofed, and he drew himself erect.

"He says any man would answer that one way," replied Nikka. "But that you seek to annoy him."

"Tell him," returned Hugh, "that I'll

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

give him a hundred thousand Turkish pounds if he'll come over to our side and back us up against Mahkouf Pasha. Explain to him about Mahkouf Pasha."

The change in Tokalji's manner was ridiculous.

"He says," translated Nikka, "that he will kill the sultan for you for a hundred thousand Turkish pounds. But he wants to see the money."

"Watty," said Hugh, "go down into the sewer-treasury and collect a sack of jewels—anything will do. Tell Tokalji I'm sending for an earnest of our good faith, Nikka."

Avarice glowed in the brigand's face. Wasso Mikali looked disgusted. He nursed some secret grudge of his own against Tokalji and had wanted to cut his throat from the minute he discovered the scoundrel was our prisoner. But Hugh's hunch was a good one. None could doubt that, as Tokalji gradually thawed under the influence of his stimulated acquisitive instincts.

And when Watty tramped in fifteen minutes afterward and plumped a bulging sack in the old thief's lap a miracle was wrought. Sweat beaded on his forehead; his hands clawed the lovely stones; his eyes shone; he cackled to himself, and crooned like a mother over her baby.

"Tell him they are his, and that we will add gold to them if he plays fair with us," continued Hugh, when he judged he had made his effect. "But he will have to remain our prisoner until we leave."

"He awaits your orders." Nikka translated the reply as Tokalji regretfully tore his attention from the treasure on his knees. "Wait a minute—" This last as Tokalji burst into a tumult of excited speech. "He says for you not to worry about Mahkouf Pasha. He knows all about the pasha. He has been smuggling arms from Rumania to Kemal Pasha at Angora, and Tokalji has played a part in the business."

Hugh just grinned, and the rest of us grinned back at him.

"We are indeed fortunate," remarked King.

"Fortunate, your eye!" returned Hugh, with jubilant disrespect. "I knew such precious scoundrels would sell each other out. Now, Nikka, you tell Tokalji he is to inform Mahkouf Pasha that he regards us as his friends, inasmuch as we relieved him last night from the oppression of a band of thieves. And we'll have Mahkouf in here and give him an earful. I suppose we'll have to drag in that poor Hilyer woman, too. I hate that. But she'll have to be made to understand her position."

THE interview that followed was absurd and sordid. Mahkouf Pasha, after an attempt at hectoring defiance, collapsed completely and begged to be let alone. Nikka, who handled him, squelched him to putty and told Wasso Mikali to see him to the street.

"And remember," Nikka concluded, "if you dare to breathe a word against us, you Levantine dog, we will show you up for what you are to the Allied high commissioners, to your master, the grand vizier, and to the Nationalists at Angora. You have played all three of these, one against the others. Go—before I kick you!"

Wasso Mikali positively chuckled as he jerked the ashen-faced mongrel to his feet and steered him up the stairs.

Maude Hilyer was not so easy. She began by a wailing tirade that degenerated into a filthy harangue. I learned afterward that she had risen in life from a position which had made her engagement for the Gaiety Theatre chorus an epochal event for her. We sent Betty from the room, and Hugh gently quieted her.

"See here, Mrs. Hilyer," he said; "we don't enjoy this any more than you do. For what happened to your husband—Perhaps anything I say will be in bad taste. But the fact remains that we had nothing against him. It was he who went after us.

"But I'm not appealing to you on grounds of decency, but of self-interest. If nothing comes out about Hilyer's end, you can go home and hold up your head. On the other hand, if you want to air what happened, I shall see to it that the whole story of my uncle's death becomes known. Do you think that then you will be received anywhere at home? I leave it to you."

The queer social vanity that was the mainspring of the woman's life responded to this argument. She dried her tears and restrained her tongue, and for a moment I felt sorry for her. But she showed her character at the last, even as she rose to go.

"It's all very well what you say, Lord Chesby," she whimpered. "But what am

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

I going to do now? Hilyer's dead, Little Depping is loaded with mortgages. His cousin George will inherit what's left of it, anyway. And I—" She hesitated artistically.

"I am not going to pay you blackmail," returned Hugh coldly, "but you may call on my solicitors this day two months. What we do for you will depend upon your conduct."

And that was the last any of us saw of Maude Hilyer. But I may as well say here that she did call on Mr. Bellowes in London, and that by Hugh's direction he arranged to pay her a small income to be conditioned on good behavior. Hugh, with his usual generosity, insisted, too, upon making substantial presents—booby-prizes, he called them—to our two Russian prisoners. They were not released, however, until we left Constantinople, as their vindictive attitude assured us of their desire to wreck our fortunes if they could discover an opportunity.

What happened to the strange pair after Wasso Mikali freed them I do not know. But I should hazard a guess that while Mrs. Hilyer will be content to live respectably in a cheap Brighton hotel, eking out her means with the practise of bridge of an uncommonly sharp brand, Serge Vassilivich and Sandra Vassilievna—whether brother and sister, in truth, I never found out—will continue to fleece their way through the smart watering-places and resorts of the Continent as long as the police permit them at large.

"Are we downhearted?" demanded Hugh, as the door closed behind Mrs. Hilyer.

"We are not," returned King. "It is amazing to reflect upon the apparent hopelessness of our position a couple of hours ago, while now we seem to have no reason to anticipate any insurmountable difficulties."

"Don't be too sure about that," I remonstrated. "We still have to consider the proposition of smuggling tons of treasure out of the country."

"We'll find a way," Nikka declared. "I feel more hopeful than I did. Hugh has given us a lesson in practical strategy. It was a master-stroke to buy Tokalji. Now we have some time to spare."

"And with submission, sir, Mr. Nikka," said Watkins, gently closing the door behind him. "Miss Betty is dead asleep on some rugs up-stairs. 'Ave you gentlemen forgot its past eight o'clock? Come, now, a bite of supper, and you'd best sleep a while."

"He's right," assented Hugh. "We're overdoing it. A night's sleep will set us all up."

We slept royally, relinquishing the guard-duty to our Gipsy allies; and the next day we woke with conviction in our united ability to overcome all remaining obstacles. At Nikka's suggestion, we called upon Wasso Mikali for advice. He pondered for five minutes or so, then spoke:

"A great treasure like this cannot be trusted in many men's hands," he said. "Otherwise I would offer to transport it by mule-trains to the dwelling-place of my tribe. Jakka knows how secure that is. But even if we succeeded in carrying it there, what should we do with it? To make use of it you must carry it to the lands where you live. So, friends of my sister's son, I say that you must put the treasure on a boat, and you must go on that boat yourselves, and you must be sure you can trust the captain."

"But how can we find such a boat and captain?" asked Hugh.

"Leave that to me," answered Wasso Mikali promptly. "I know certain men of my race who can furnish me with information about the vessels that come to the Golden Horn. And in the mean time you must make boxes to hold the treasure."

WE HEARD no more from him for a week. He went and came, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, and we in the house in Sokaki Masyeri, prisoners as well as captors, labored with saw and hatchet, hammer and nails. As fast as we shaped the boxes we carried them down to the drain and packed them, wrapping gold and gems in whatever fabrics we could find round the house. In this way we used up all the loose lumber, cloth and bedding in Tokalji's storerooms.

Then, one night as we sat in the atrium, very sore as to hands and fingers from the unaccustomed carpentry, there was a knock on the courtyard door, and Wasso Mikali ushered in a tall, thin man in a blue sea-officer's cap. He left this man in the courtyard and came down to us.

"I have brought you a sea-captain who

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

does not fear to dodge the law," said the old Gipsy without preface. "He loves a Circassian girl who lives in a street near the khan of the Georgians, and I have made it plain to him that if we do business with him the girl stays in my custody for surety of his honesty. He is a Russian, and his ship is his own—or so he says."

"You did not tell him what we wanted him for?" questioned Hugh.

"Tell him only what you must," counseled Wasso Mikali. "I think I have a hold on this man, but I would not trust him."

"Why can't we tell him that we have made a remarkable find of ancient statuary, mosaics and that sort of thing?" I suggested. "He will look us up, and the story will sound credible. We'll let him know that the government wouldn't like to see such a valuable collection go to foreigners, and so we have to smuggle it."

"That will do," Nikka approved. "And that will explain why we must send the boxes aboard secretly."

We made the deal with the Russian captain that night. He was not a bad chap, but a bit put to it to earn the keep of himself, his crew and his vessel by reason of the anomalous situation in which they found themselves, the *Slava* still running under the old imperial registry. She was a tidy tramp of five thousand tons, and Captain Malakovich made no objection to turning over the necessary cabins for our use. He expressed himself feelingly as glad to help any one who was trying to beat the Turkish government, and he served us with a loyalty that earned him a considerable additional honorarium upon our arrival in Southampton.

"I'll enter your stuff on my manifests after we clear the port," he said frankly. "I don't care whether I ever come back here. As to the Circassian girl, Wasso Mikali can send her to Salonica when he receives word that I have landed you gentlemen. I'll trade with the Greeks after this. I'm through with the Turks."

The transfer of the treasure occupied a week, for we could only work at night, carrying the heavy boxes down the drain and utilizing the limited stowage-room of the *Curlew*. We set Watkins aboard the *Slava* to watch the boxes, and the rest of us either mounted guard on our prisoners or else made more boxes and packed. It was a hectic time. The only real excitement that marked it, however, was a visit we received from two of Tokalji's men from the camp of the tribe in the Forest of Belgrade. Kara took care of them, sending them back with imaginary instructions from her father.

The last day after the treasure-boxes, now duly stenciled: "Antiques, Statuary, Ch'gs. Pd., With Care," were stowed away in a secret compartment of the *Slava's* hold, we all found time to go to the British embassy to see Hugh and Betty married. Kara, strangely subdued, hung to Nikka's arm and watched the ceremony with amazement.

"Do the Franks have to do all that to be married?" she commented. "I am more than ever glad I am a Tzigane."

"What are you going to do with her, Nikka?" asked Betty. "Send her to school? Or let me look after her? I'd love to."

Nikka laughed.

"You wouldn't very long. No. I'm not going to curb my wild hawk so drastically. She shall taste of civilization sip by sip until it savors sweetly on her tongue."

"And you?" cried Hugh. "Aren't you coming with us?"

"No. I must tame her. And in taming her I shall indulge the craving that has grown in me to sample again the joys of the open road that I have not known since I was a boy. We are going to wander, Kara and I. We will go up into the Rhodopes with Wasso Mikali for a while, and then we will take the Tzigane's trail through the Balkans and over the Danube and the Carpathians, on, on, wherever we choose."

SO, WHEN the *Slava* steamed out of the Golden Horn that afternoon, Hugh and Betty, Vernon King, Watkins and I waved good-by to our comrade. Nikka and Kara stood on the pier-end as long as we could see them; and after they had dwindled out of sight we turned our gaze on the matchless sky-line of Stamboul, with its lofty domes and slender minarets and close-packed buildings tumbling down the hillsides to the gray cordon of the old Byzantine sea-wall.

And on the very edge of the wall was poised the squat bulk of Tokalji's weird establishment. We could see it clearly, the fine lines of the House of the Married, the plumy tip of a cedar waving from its mysterious hidden courtyard, and the L-shaped

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

mass of the bachelors' quarters opposite. They bulked smaller at this distance than when seen from the bobbing cockpit of the *Curlew*. Already it began to seem difficult to believe that within their walls we had witnessed so much of tragedy and devotion.

"See! There is the mouth of the drain!" exclaimed Betty, beside Hugh.

"Do you recall, Jack, how surprised we were when Watty popped out of it?" chuckled Hugh.

"Some day I really must return and follow that up," said King thoughtfully. "Archeologically speaking, it was quite the most important discovery that we made."

Watkins shook his head sorrowfully.

"I've been thinking, Mr. Jack, sir," he said. "They'll never believe this story in the servants' 'all—Mrs. Prouty and 'Awkins and Burbadge and the rest. They'll laugh at me or arsk 'is ludship to 'ave the County Council commit me for lunacy."

"They'd believe you if you accepted your share of the treasure," I told him.

"Per'aps," he admitted. "But what good would it do me, sir? I've no call for it, what with me valeting and all, and in the end Lloyd George would get it, 'im and the hincome-tax collector. They will any'ow, sir! By cricky, Mr. Jack, I 'adn't thought of that!"

And for the first and only time in the course of our acquaintance Watkins indulged in a broad grin.

THE END

Coming in October

A COMPLETE NOVEL

By Will Levington Comfort

The Threshing-Floor

How a Wastrel Found Himself—in China.

SHORT STORIES

The Double Code — By I. A. R. Wylie
Sitting in judgment as a too common indulgence

Found — By L. Patrick Greene
Africa as a finishing school for spoiled sons

The Ultimate Good — By John Charles Brownell
How far will a woman go to save a renegade?

The Capias — By William Merriam Rouse
Draw-poker and a beautiful girl

Craig Kennedy — By Arthur B. Reeve
Dead men sometimes do tell tales

The Ghost Whistle — By Eugene Jones
A man who made only one concession

Further chapters of "Mellowing Money," by Francis Lynde, and "Thoroughbred," by Mrs. Wilson Woodrow, and the beginning of a new serial (see page 38).

October *EVERYBODY'S*—out September 15th

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

A Samson Reversal

A Barber Unwittingly Changes the Course of Mr. Philip Sutherland's Life—and Also That of Mrs. Sutherland

By Gerald B. Breitigam

ALL during dinner in their Chelsea flat, Mr. Philip Sutherland's brain was hot with revolt. It was a disordered meal, hastily thrown together, for his wife had leaned on her cushion in the open parlor window, enjoying the first warm day of spring, until too late to prepare a proper dinner.

"An' when I seen the Kellys bein' put out on the street, them with their noses in the air all the time, an' that flashy girl o' theirs that I always said was no better than she should be; would you believe it, they didn't have a decent stick——"

Her voice flowed on monotonously, relating with unctuous gusto the downfall of the prideful Kellys, leaping to the tribulations of a neighbor who had been sent to jail for bootlegging, dwelling enviously on the wealth of the O'Ryans across the hall, who had installed a splendid new piano.

Sutherland recognized the signs preceding the launching of a thinly veiled diatribe upon their poverty, their inability to wear and eat and do as wore and ate and did the O'Ryans, and he knew that unless she were at once diverted, it would be his lot in a moment to bow before reproaches leveled like lances at his head. But he could think of nothing to say that would divert her. Happily, two of their three children began to quarrel loudly, and Mrs. Sutherland fell to slapping them, and in this interlude he managed to escape in search of his pipe.

He stood at one of the two windows of the little parlor, gazing unseeingly into the street, four stories down, lined with cheap shops. Their windows were alight, and shone with a factitious glow belying their drabness. Night had spread a certain magic over the grim utilitarianism of this thoroughfare of lower West Side New York.

Sutherland looked remarkably like a man who was about to cry as, having filled his pipe with slightly tremulous fingers, he let it hang unlit from a corner of his mouth while he leaned against the window-frame and gave himself over to reflection. His wife looked in from the dining-room, where the children again were at their quarreling as they assisted in clearing the table. She called to him sharply:

"Ain't you goin'ter get at them books?"

Sutherland's nerves quivered, his body tensed, awaiting further onslaught. But it did not come. He heard her move off toward the kitchen. Slowly he relaxed.

Mr. Philip Sutherland was a bookkeeper whose salary never quite met the needs of his family, and in the endeavor to make ends meet he worked at night on the books of small merchants of the neighborhood who could not afford to give employment even to an underpaid girl fresh from a business school. It was to this work his wife had reference, and he turned toward the old desk against the wall beside him, prepared to begin his nightly grind, but even as his fingers closed over the key, a gust of passion shook him and stayed his hand.

He could not work over the figures tonight; that was all there was to it. For no particular cause that he could fathom, all the revolt accumulating for years was boiling up within him. Indeed, he did not try to analyze himself to get at the cause, knowing only that he suffered. This in itself, however, was unusual, as, for so many years that he could not recall their number, he had been browbeaten by his wife until he had lost even the ability to pity himself. Now all his woes descended upon him, as

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

if some demon had stored them up for years, merely that he might feel their weight the more when realization arrived.

A sort of panorama of his life flashed before his mental vision—day and night an adding machine, and, a meek man servile under the domination of a fat scold.

Suddenly he slammed shut the lid of the desk and seized his hat from a chair.

"Gotta go to the barber!" he shouted in a thick voice. "Need a hair-cut!"

BY THE time he reached the street he had experienced a number of emotions which included trepidation over the consequences of his rash and unpremeditated act, and anger at himself because of his cowardly resort to stratagem. Why couldn't he play the man and take a holiday from those awful books without lying about it? Why? Because that would have meant a wordy quarrel, and such things he strove desperately to avoid. Not for years had he talked back to his wife, for his soul shrank with dread of the incessant wrangling he felt certain would follow.

Even now the passion which had propelled him thus far into rebellion was fading away before fear of the consequences. The barber shop was the last place to which he wanted to go, with its lights and its assertive, loud-voiced males sitting about, discussing this and that, laying down the law. In their presence he always felt mean and small, as if not quite a man. Nevertheless, it was toward Tony's shop round the corner that he turned, driven by his wife as much as if she stood behind him. He was picturing to himself the scene if he returned unshorn. His wife would speak of his absent-mindedness, and that would lead to a caustic diatribe on all his other despicable qualities which operated to keep them forever poor.

A meek and unobtrusive little man, he entered the barber shop, and nobody seeing him would have suspected the metamorphosis about to occur. He walked with a little stoop, his trousers sagged at the knees, and his mustache drooped, too—the heavy mustache to which he had clung for many years, perhaps as a shield, something behind which to hide the trembling of his mouth.

Into the chair he sank with a sigh, barely noticing that Tony had a new assistant. He closed his eyes deliberately as a signal that he did not want conversation, but a trace of indigestion combined with the close atmosphere of the shop to put him to sleep in reality.

A shriek—a frenzied gabble of cries. With a start he opened his eyes and sat up. Who was the maniac choking his barber? Why, it was Tony! Mr. Philip Sutherland did not know what to do, but another customer, quicker to act, although he was weak from laughter, pulled Tony from his victim, and then sank against Mr. Sutherland's chair, apparently about to expire from mirth.

"Murderer!" shrieked Tony, while the new assistant cowered out of his reach. "What for you do it? A regular customer—such a fine mustache!"

He continued, but Sutherland no longer listened. He had seen his reflection in the mirror, and had received a shock that made his senses reel. His mustache, the shield behind which he had hidden from the world for fifteen years, that one thing about him which was opulent, was no more. The new assistant had shaved it off while he slept.

But Mr. Philip Sutherland, the mouse-like man of forty who looked older, was gone, too. In his place was a stranger, hair neatly pompadoured, upper lip close shaven, cheeks lean and eyes bright with wonderment and dawning delight. This stranger jumped briskly out of the chair, seized his hat and coat and laughed aloud, joyously.

"'S all right, Tony!" he cried. "Forget it!"

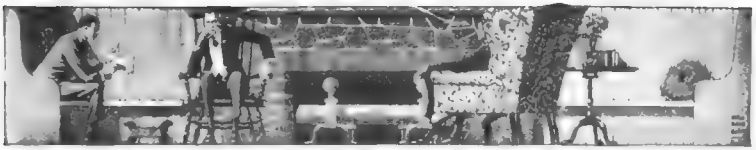
Then he paid his bill, gave the stunned new barber a quarter tip, and sallied forth. Outside, the new Mr. Sutherland squared his shoulders, hitched up his trousers, and pulled his belt tight. Thank goodness, he had retained the slenderness of youth. Why, he was a young man still. He even smiled boldly at a young girl, and she smiled back. When had that ever happened before?

"Shirkin' your work again," cried his wife, shrilly, as he reentered the flat. "How can we expect to make ends meet or get anywhere if you're too lazy to do a little honest work? Where you been all this time? Not at the barber's. Where you been? Why——"

She was stunned into silence as the new Mr. Philip Sutherland entered from the hall.

"You talk too much, Mollie," he said. "Now, *you* listen to *me*."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Everybody's Chimney Corner

Where Reader, Author and Editor
Gather to Talk Things Over

WE HEAR from Hank Smith. No address. Just Hank Smith. He paid five cents for a copy of the November EVERYBODY'S, which had found its way to a junk shop—somewhere. Hank may have gone beyond Bill Adams' remarks upon Values, which was about the first thing he could have seen—but if he did, he doesn't say so. On the strength of that, however, this, from Hank:

NOTIS

This little matter of correction is notis to you that we have markt down EVERYBODY'S for suppression when we establish the dictatorship of the proletariat here. We don't single out EVERYBODY'S alone or especially: we include it with all bourgeois magazines. Even including such supposedly radical (?) papers as "The Liberator," "The New Solidarity," "Industrial Worker," and other stool pigeon publications.

When will all this be? With the break up of International Capital after the next World War. That already looms in the offing.

HANK SMITH.

NOW, bourgeois does hurt. We don't like that. We prefer to think of ourselves as akin to the aristocrat rather than the bourgeois. But there is salve for our wounded feelings. When we contemplate the despair of the others Hank Smith has on his little list we are prepared to die happy.

Poor old Bill Adams! Hank sends back his piece, "corrected in grammar and economics by a class conscious working man." Hank is a reactionary, at that. He objects, for all his own simplified spelling, to a split infinitive. One wonders what the Red Army under Hank will do in hot weather. Probably its officers won't be allowed to unbutton their blouses. And if any one fails to salute Hank——!

AN ATTEMPT to discover something more about HARLEY P. LATHROP (A Square Guy, page 49) than his work reveals led to an appeal to his agent, who, finally, obtained this answer to *his* appeal:

Have been professional ball player, engraver (jewelry), professional dog trainer, and cow puncher, with a whole lot of wandering and knocking around sandwiched in. At present, as you know, I am dry nursing a bunch of cows, keeping about two jumps ahead of the bank and trusting that they will increase in price enough to offset the big loss all cowmen took a few years ago.

As far as saying anything about writing—that's to laugh and you know it. Maybe some day if I don't get to be a doddering senile inside of ten years I'll pull something worth reading by accident. Outside of that I had rather be classed as a cowman. Have a few slight claims there as I have hung on while a whole lot better men went to the wall. Course I like to hunt, preferably wolf hunting from horseback. Tell any kind of a lie you can think of and I'll trust none of my friends down this way will see it and hand me a good laugh.

CAREY WONDERLY (The Cake Eater, page 139) makes, with some reluctance, certain disclosures about himself. He was on the stage—an early ambition to become a jockey having been defeated by nature, which saw to it that at seventeen he stood nearly six feet and weighed 170 pounds. No wonder that, as he says, his family didn't oppose his wishes—although that, naturally, annoyed him when he spent his vacations at Saratoga.

Presently, however (he writes), I found my way to the stage, stepping from a church choir to a musical comedy chorus, one summer holiday while I was home from school. I was to return to school

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

in September. I didn't; instead I ran away to New York and found another job on the stage. And for the next five years I did a little of everything from chorus work to Shakespeare—nothing very well, I'm afraid. I happen to be a barytone and it is the tenor who sings about the moon and gets the money. When I took a shot at the drama, because of my youth I was dubbed a juvenile—and then it was discovered that I was taller than the leading man! And no self-respecting leading man would tolerate such a condition.

When I was fortunate enough to have an engagement I lived in New York—although I have made towns which even Columbus couldn't have discovered with the naked eye. When nobody wanted me, and I went broke, I returned home and wrote yarns about the theatre until I gathered together sufficient funds to return to New York. It was all rather fun, and tomorrow seemed a long way off. Not until after "My Actress Wife" appeared anonymously did I settle down in earnest to work.

MR. WONDERLY tells, too, of one heroic rule he has—he works in the mornings, and never eats anything until his day's work is done! Some authors who needn't be named might follow his example!

Authors really do find it hard to tell much about themselves. From WILLIAM ALMON WOLFF (Top Dog, page 91) comes the same complaint—nothing to say. This is his attempt to be autobiographical:

It's rather a shock, when I'm asked to write something about myself, to face the fact that there's so little to write. Some people have all the luck! Consider me. Born in Brooklyn, in 1885. Burned out in 1889, whereupon my family went to Europe, me tagging along, for three months, and stayed till 1901. That wasn't fair -if that darned fire had held off until say, about 1907, it would have suited me a lot better.

It's sickening to think of the chances I had in Europe and the things I saw when I was too young for them to do me any good! I held a candle in a Greek church in Paris when they were having a memorial service for the Czar Alexander of Russia. I saw the Czar Nicholas come to Paris and the way the city went wild over him and the dawning entente—and never had a prophetic gleam about what that celebration foreshadowed in 1914.

I stood near Portsmouth and watched Queen Victoria's body going by on a royal yacht, while the guns sounded, one every minute, and King Edward stood on the deck, thinking. And I hadn't the vision even to speculate about his thoughts!

At that, though, as I look back, it does begin to look as if things had been a little more exciting than, at first glance, I supposed! Life is like that, of course. The thing you're living through is never history. Just as Molière's man didn't realize until some one told him, that he'd been talking prose all his life!

Yes, if beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so are glory and romance and adventure and all the thrilling, lovely things of life. And it's a good thing to be brought up with a round turn, from time to time, and made to realize that again. I've no complaint to make. But I don't see how I can make my life seem as enviable and exciting as it really has been, in a few lines like these.

BONNIE GINGER (In The Descendent, page 39) has lived for some years in New York, but, although she was born in Maine, her descent upon New York was by way of Kansas and Colorado. She wrote first for a paper she and the other children of her Kansas district school published, went on writing while she was in college at Colorado Springs; continued so to do when *The World* brought her to New York.

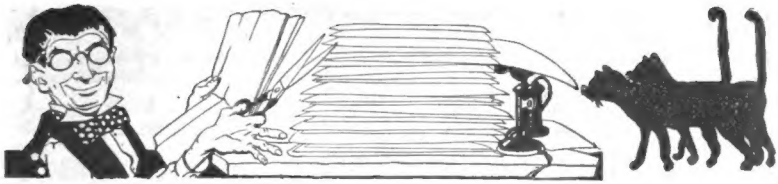
But newspaper work was unable to interest her permanently; the wider opportunities of untrammeled and acknowledged fiction appealed to her, and her work, in turn, soon began to appeal to many magazines.

THE difficulty so many authors find in writing about themselves is something a psychologist of the new school might find it profitable to study. It is not diffidence or modesty, either true or false, that restrains them, as a rule. They are perfectly willing to tell what they know—but they find, when they settle down to the task, that they know surprisingly little.

One reason, perhaps, for this, is that so much of an author's work is, of necessity, although usually unconsciously, autobiographical.

There are few stories in which at least one character does not, to some extent, represent the author himself—speak and act for him, give voice to his innermost thoughts, achieve his unsatisfied ambitions, retrieve his real defeats. And that explains a good deal. How can you expect an author to sacrifice the domino he wears when he reveals himself through his work? Come out in the open—use his own face, in the inimitable phrase of Harry Leon Wilson's Montague girl? He won't—not if he is really a master of his art.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Prose *and* Worse, *by* Gridley Adams

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

At Adams, Wis.: "*Feed & Livery Barn. Pay in Advance. B. Sweet.*"
In Chicago: "*Combination Store and Bed. Inquire within. (E. P. W.) J. B. Woo.*"
In Buffalo store window: "*Steel Lingerie and Waists.*"
Plumbers in Chillicothe, Ohio: "*Wait Brothers.*"
Architect in Iowa City, Ia.: "*O. H. Carpenter.*"
Gymnasium instructor in Chicago High School: "*Dorothy Supple.*"
Attorney in E. St. Louis, Ill.: "*A. T. Gassaway.*"
In Martinsville, Ill.: "*Miss Golden Buckle.*"
Married in Kirksville, Mo.: "*Self—Shott.*"
Wedded in Edwardsville, Ill.: "*Hilda Take.*" But what matters it who took her?
On Chicago grocery: "*Spinach, 10 cents a peek.*" And you're lucky to get that much.
State Inspector of Bakeries for Washington: "*Miss Arizona Bonanza Belle Wimple.*"
In Chicago: "*Gall & Co., Monumental Works.*" Probably one of those monumental lyres.
In New York City: "*All Kinds of Ice-Cold Milk.*"

(New York Tribune)

CELLAR TO TESTIFY IN RUM SCANDAL

The congregation will all join in singing Gottschalk's "Last Hope."

(Los Angeles Times)

SANDER man wanted for sanding Queen Anne legs. Los Angeles Woodworking Co., 1217 E. 14th.

My dear, I should expire.

(Salt Lake City Desert News)

Dead or Useless cows or horses. 'Phone Murray 370 J. (R. T. S.)

Hot Dog! All Hots!

(Los Angeles Examiner)

Telegrams of congratulation to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Barthelmess on the girth of a baby girl kept the wires busy yesterday between Los Angeles and New York. (W. W. K.)

"Angels Ever Bright and Spare."

(Detroit News)

"The Fly," which visited Detroit last summer, is soon to return to the screen.

'Salright, where they come one at a time.

(Sheikcago Tribune)

NIGHTGOWN—LOST—SILK, ON ROOSEvelt-rd. or Ashland car. Lawndale, 7761.

A mere slip, probably.

(Lead, S. Dak., paper)

Notice—I will not be responsible for any debts contracted by my wife from this date. 3—12.
E—— H——

Notice—I am sorry I put ad in paper yesterday. I take it all back. 3—13. E—— H——

Why, his name isn't H——; it's *Legion.*

(From Trinidad, Col.)

Miss Iona Peacock left this morning to visit in Denver a few days before going to Chicago to spend several weeks.

"Zoo's Zoo" in Colorado.

Copyright, 1923, by Gridley Adams.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

(Darby, Pa., Progress)

FEMALE HELP WANTED

ONE extra heavy 20-gallon horizontal Colored girl wanted, steady housework. M. WEINER, Gelnolden ave., and Chester Pike, Glenolden.

What! Waste her on housework?

(Lipscomb, Tex., Limelight)

Harve Hamilton is very ill because of having the flu.

Thoroughly sick of it.

(Pendleton Ridge News)

J. T. Draper was shopping in Dry Ridge Saturday.

Miss Ellmer Mae Draper spent from Thursday until Saturday afternoon with Miss Inez Blackburn.

Mrs. J. T. Draper and two daughters, Misses Ella and Hazel, spent Thursday afternoon with Mrs. J. E. Wells and Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Scott.

J. T. Draper spent Saturday night until bedtime with Mr. Matthew Jenkins.

The Saturday-night round-up.

(Marriage notices in Falmouth, Ky., Outlook)

SCOTT—HOFFMAN.

May the sunshine of happiness and prosperity ever be theirs, with never a cloud to darken their paths as in love's fond embrace they journey through life together.

MARTIN—BYRD.

Now that Nora is a Martin Byrd, we trust she will sail on the wings of love the rest of her days, and occasionally fly down here to her native home, where she with Mr. Martin, will be ever welcome.

Boy, put some fresh straw and some crums out under that cherry tree, quick!

(From an Ohio Weekly)

While Mike Truex, W. L. Vorhies and Joel T. Davis were talking in Mr. Truex's store Saturday, H. E. Young came in and said, if there was one thing above another he prided himself on it was in being honest. Just imagine what followed.

Miss Forshey has lettuce almost large enough to begin on.

The scribe knows one of the most economical girls on the ridge; she bought $6 worth of goods and not a lump of candy, because the writer was there when she rid home. Oh, my! How stingy!

Born to Dr. and Mrs. Lewis Walters, Thursday, a girl baby. At last reports Doc was doing well.

Chas Swain is attending the hennery for the Misses Moffitt and St. Clair.

Many through here are aching to get out in their Fords.

***I* should say "out *of*"!**

(Heading in Sheikcago Tribune)

SHE COULDN'T SLEEP NIGHTS

Try going to church.

(On the flap of an envelope I received)

If you don't get this letter in 5 days send it back to me.

(Announcement of candy-boy in Parsons' Theater, Hartford)

"Half pound'n insulted chocolates."

(Burlington, Ia., Gazette)

Burlington police are searching for an alleged forger, aged about 55 years, who is wanted in Iowa City, and who came to Burlington on Saturday night. He is about 5 feet 10 inches in height, smooth face, wore a soft brown hat and a dark coat. It is suspected that he carries a fountain pen.

Ah, I have an *inkling* as to who that chap is.

(Lipscomb, Tex., Limelight)

A majority of the people of Lipscomb have been down with the flu the past week. We are proud to relate that there have been no deaths, but the affected ones have been very sick and we are all anxious to see the old flu vanish again from our midst.

From WHERE?

(Limelight, Texas)

MARRIED—Miss Sylvia Brown and James Pollis, last Saturday at the parsonage of Rev. Gordon. The bride is one of those spineless females who doesn't know any more about work than an oyster and never wiggled a dish-rag more than three times in her sweet life. The Lord knows she's no beauty, and she has a gait like a duck. The groom is an up-to-date loafer. He has been living with the old folks at home all his life and is not worth gunpowder to blow him up. The entire community sympathizes with their lack of brains in pulling off this matrimonial stunt it's their affair—the rest of us should worry. Parents should feel grateful that these two freaks were mutually attracted, for by this only one family is ruined. However the prospects are that they will have a hard life.

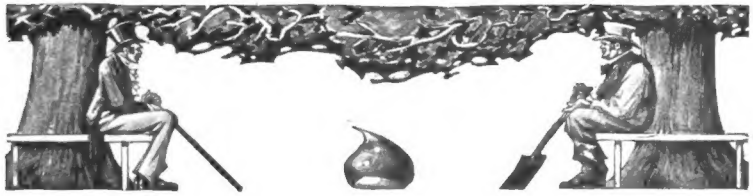
If you know of a choice piece of scandal that would set this town by the ears, don't tell it. Pushing it along would be hard on the ears. Besides, retailing scandal doesn't do anybody any good, and it does a lot of harm. Too many innocent people have to suffer for the acts of a few.

Then again if you are not climbing up to perfection mark you can never tell when your own lid will be blown off.

Boy, please close that window. Hurry!

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Everybody's Chestnut Tree

EDITOR'S NOTE: Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped addressed envelope.

SUSPICIOUS MISTRESS: Jessie, didn't I hear you talking with somebody?

COOK: Yassum; reckon so.

MISTRESS: Haven't I told you repeatedly, Jessie, that you must never have any of your gentlemen friends call here?

COOK: Hee, hee, missus! How he will laff when he hears dat! Lo' bless you, dat wasn't no gemmun frien.' Dat was jus' mah wuffless, no-'count husban'.

CORNELIUS COLE, former United States senator from California, has passed the hundred-year mark and is still hale and hearty. A warm friend of Abraham Lincoln, he recently told how the president once successfully met his importunity for some appointment by relating an anecdote.

"Senator," said Mr. Lincoln, "in early times there were only three churches in Springfield, the Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist, all orthodox, when suddenly there came along a smart young Universalist minister, who began to preach with a view to establish a church of his own. This alarmed the orthodox preachers, and they consulted together to see what should be done about it. Their conclusion was to take turns and preach the intruder down. It fell to the lot of the Presbyterian dominie to preach the first sermon, and he began by reminding his hearers how happily they were getting along in Springfield, spiritually and otherwise. 'And now,' he said, 'there comes among us a stranger to establish a church on the belief that all men are to be saved; but, my brethren, let us hope for better things.'"

AUNT JINNY, a Carolina negress, was a great advocate of the rod as a help in child-rearing. As a result of an unmerciful beating which she gave her youngest and "orneriest," she was brought into court one day by outraged neighbors.

The judge, after giving her a severe lecture, asked if she had anything to say.

"Jest one thing, jedge," she replied. "I wants to ax you a question. Was you ever the parient of a perfectly wuthless cullud chile?"

IN A certain congregation in the South there was a lovable old lady who was most devoted to flowers and who maintained a beautiful garden. She was especially fond of sweet peas, and each Sunday in the summer it was her bouquet that adorned the pulpit of her church. Suddenly there was a change in the flowers, a fact which the minister noticed. Accordingly he asked the lady after service why she brought no more sweet peas.

A sad smile came to her face.

"You don't like them," she said simply. "Last Sunday you pointed right at my sweet peas and said, 'God loves even the meanest flower that blows.'"

ON A FARM in South Georgia is posted this sign:

"Trespaser's will be persekuted to the full extent of 2 mean mongral dorgs which ain't never been ovarly soshibil with strangers and 1 dubbel barelt shot-gun which ain't loaded with no sofy pillers. Dam, if I ain't tired of this hel raisin on my proputy."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

IT IS told that an impecunious nobleman saw a portrait in a London shop window in which he was much interested. He went in and ascertained that the price was twelve pounds and ten shillings.

"I'll give you ten pounds," he said to the shopkeeper, but the price was refused and there was no sale made.

Some time later the nobleman was dining in the magnificent new London house of a business man of the type called self-made. He noticed a familiar portrait on the wall.

"Ah," said the host, observing his guest's interest in the painting. "That is the portrait of an ancestor of mine!"

"Indeed!" said the peer. "Then we must be related," he continued with perfect gravity. "He was within fifty shillings of being an ancestor of mine!"

AN OLD darky was taken ill and called in a physician of his own race. After a time, as there were no sign of improvement, he called in a white doctor, who soon felt the old man's pulse and then examined his tongue.

"Did your other doctor take your temperature?" he asked.

"I don't know, boss," replied the sick negro. "I hain't missed nothin' but my watch as yit."

"I CAME to the theatre by way of an old-time medicine show and the circus," Ford Sterling, the actor-director, remarked the other day at Hollywood. "I'm an honest-to-God trouper and proud of it.

"I was the original Zeno, the boy clown, and with all the big shows when I was a kid, but my first turn was with a one-ring circus that was just about able to make its jumps.

"As my professional name commenced with the last letter in the alphabet I was last on the pay roll and about half the time the cash ran out before they got to me. I stayed on for I was getting my beans and some money every once in a while.

"The next season came and I was up against it, after a long hard winter, so I wired for a ticket, got it and reported.

" 'Glad to see you, Zeno,' the boss told me as he shook hands. 'You go on the pay roll beginning to-day.' "

" 'Zeno, hell,' I answered. 'I go on that pay roll as Ajax this year.' "

HE HAD married a fluffy young thing and as time went on grew to detest her homely little pet poodle dog that snapped and snarled whenever he came near. One day Fido mysteriously disappeared and he promptly and generously offered one hundred dollars for its recovery.

"But I thought," said a friend, "you hated that dog like poison?"

"So I did," he replied; "I could not bear it."

"Then why on earth do you offer such a big reward for its return?"

"I like to please my wife."

"Well, that may be, but $100 is sure to bring the dog back."

"I think not," he answered, "unless some one saw me bury it in the garden."

"TOM, go fetch the old horse."

"Why the old one, father?"

"Wear out the old ones first, is my motto."

"Well, then, you fetch the horse."

MR. MILLERTON, who is a great deal of a hypochondriac and enjoys looking forward "to the end," was in an especially depressed mood one evening when he gave some thought to the question of a second marriage for his wife.

"Harriet, my dear," he said, gloomily, "when I am gone from this vale of tears, you must marry again. It is my dearest wish."

"William," observed his wife, with a faint smile, "no one will marry an old woman like me. You ought to have died fifteen years ago for that."

MINISTER (*to flapper*): Would you care to join us in the new missionary movement?

FLAPPER: I'm crazy to try it. Is it anything like the fox-trot?

A NEGRO WOMAN was telling a friend that she had been to a wedding. She described the bride's white satin gown, the veil, the slippers, the flowers and everything.

"And what did the bridegroom wear?" asked the friend.

"Well, do you know that good for nothing nigger never showed up at all," was the astonishing reply.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN